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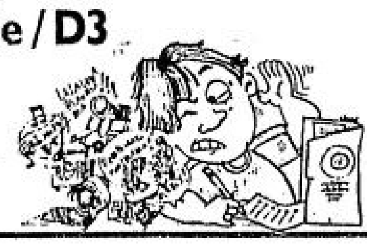

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Wednesday, May 5, 2004 ★★ 60 pages / 5 sections / vol. 19 / no. 147 P18

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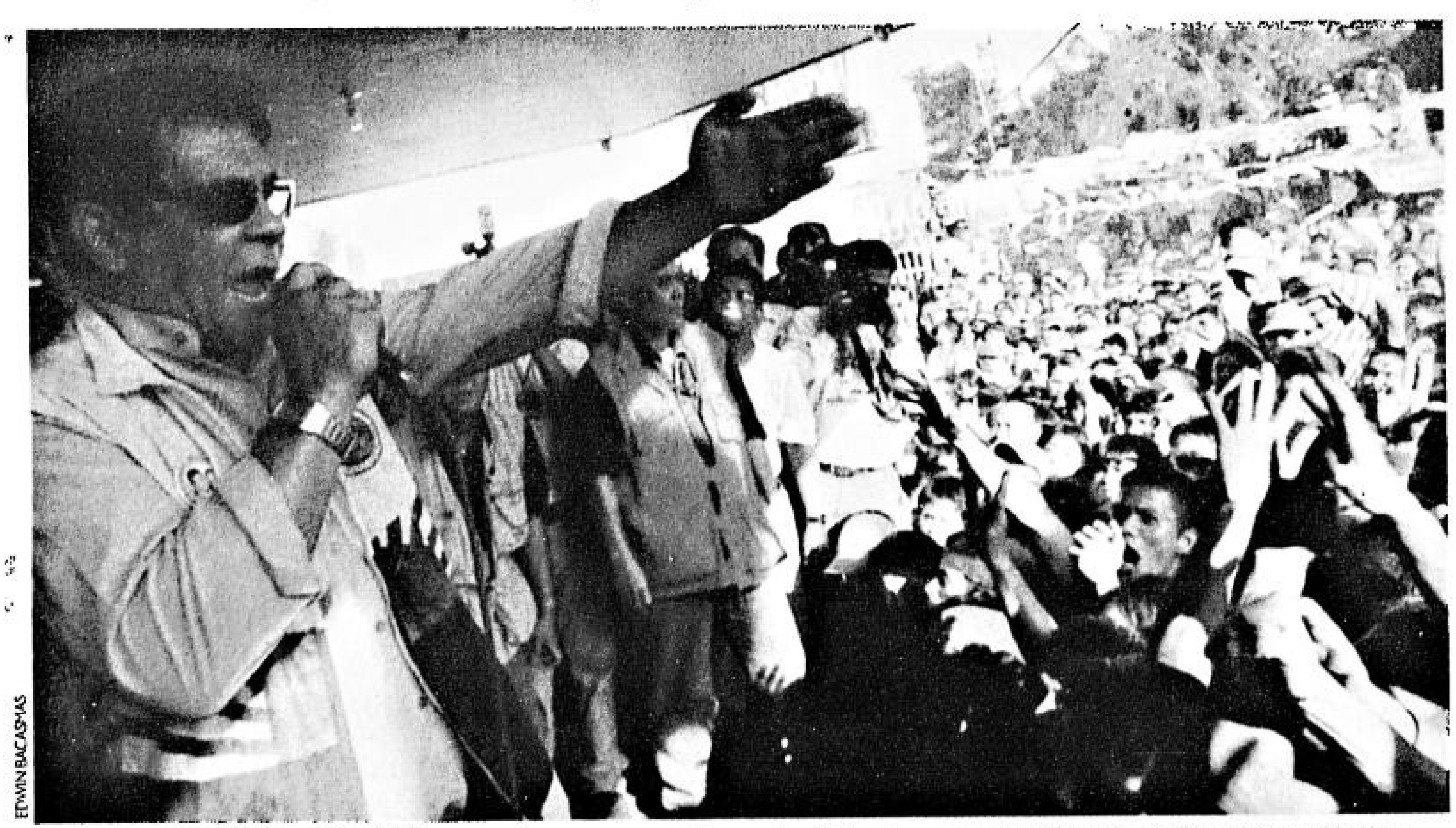

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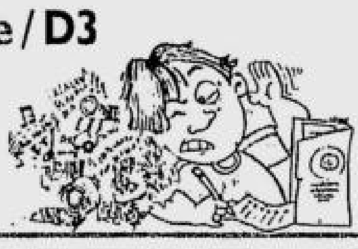

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SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/05/05/04

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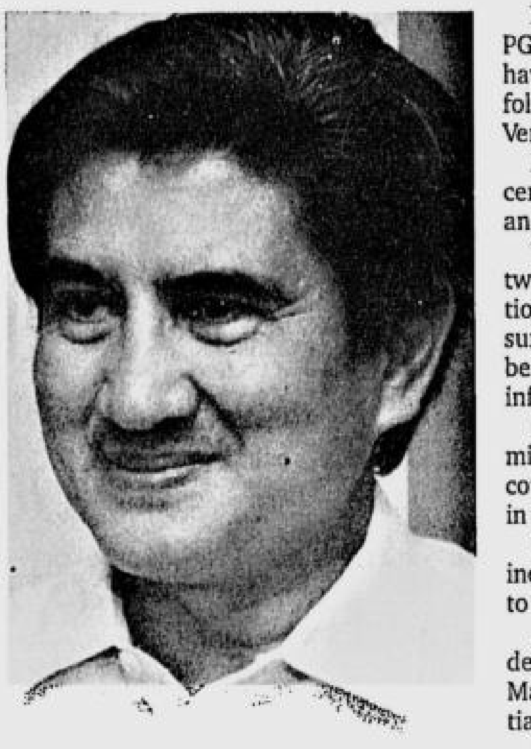

HONASAN

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Although he declined to mention other details of their meeting with De Venecia, Macahiya said it was the Speaker who initiated the talks.

He said the meeting with the ruling coalition did not include the possible dismissal of the rebellion charges against him, Honasan and thousands pf other PGBI members for their alleged participation in the failed July coup.

"No. We never asked them to dismiss the case against us. In fact, we're ready to face [our accusers] in court. All we are after is an honest and fair elections," he stressed.

4 provinces, 40 towns in Comelec control

FOUR provinces and more than 40 towns have been placed under the control of the Commission on Elections because of the intense rivalry there among those contesting the May 10 elections.

The four provinces placed under Comelec control were Masbate, Occidental Mindoro, Basilan and Sulu.

The commission has reconsidered the status of Catanduanes province, which commissioner Resurreccion Borra earlier identified as another hot spot, to be placed under Comelec control, said Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos.

Aside from the four provinces, the commission en banc yesterday also decided to place nine municipalities in the Cordillera Autonomous Region, six towns in Pangasinan, three in Ilocos Sur and two in Ilocos Norte under its control.

2 Bulacan towns

Two Bulacan towns, one in Nueva Ecija, one in Albay, three in Sorsogon and four in Camarines Sur, Danao City in Cebu, two towns each in Zamboanga del Norte and Sur, the town of Tawi-Tawi, one town in Misamis Occidental, one in Davao and one in Maguindanao were also similarly ordered placed under Comelec control.

Once an area is placed under Comelec control, a task force composed of election, military and police officials would take control of the town's day-to-day activities, including the deployment of the military and police. *Martin P. Marfil*

Bloody peaceful so far, PNP records show

By Christian V. Esguerra and Alcuin Papa

SO FAR, it's been bloody peaceful.

As of last Monday, there were only 81 cases of political violence nationwide, a more than 200-percent drop from the 269 cases recorded during the 2001 elections, Philippine National Police records showed.

The 1998 elections were similarly bloody with 267 incidents of poll-related violence while the elections three years earlier weren't any better with 121 cases.

With only five days to go before elections, PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao yesterday dared to say that it was unlikely that this year's figures would exceed any of the last three elections'.

It was still premature to predict peaceful elections because, he told reporters, "One violent incident can easily prove us wrong."

Still, PNP figures collated since Dec. 15 were anything but alarming.

Of the 202 casualties this year, 69 were killed (24 were candidates), while 133 (nine were candidates) were injured, official police records showed. Police have marked 44 towns and cities as "hot spots" for potential violence, many of them in the central and southern Philippines, where many "partisan armed groups" operate.

Goltiao said this year's figures could have been less had it not been for the explosion at a gymnasium in Parang, Maguindanao, last Jan. 4.

That single incident killed 18 people and wounded at least 80 others, including Parang Mayor Vivencio Bataga, believed to be the target of the attack.

The 2001 elections were the most violent since 1995 with 111 people killed and 293 others wounded, the PNP reported. Of the 404 casualties, 21 politicians were killed and nine others were injured.

Goltiao attributed this year's relatively peaceful election season to stringent security measures which both the PNP and the Armed Forces have been jointly implementing since December.

Part of these measures were the establishment of checkpoints and the signing of peace covenants between warring politicians especially in areas that have a history of bloody elections.

Areas where politicians had signed peace agreements include Abra, Nueva Ecija, Negros Occidental, Mindoro, Bulacan, Bataan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Maguindanao, and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The success of peace covenants, said Goltiao, was showcased in the ARMM, usually perceived as the region most prone to political violence with 81 private armed groups believed to be working for warring clans there.

But the region has had three cases of election-related violence since December.

Topping this bracket is Bicol with 12, followed by Western Mindanao with 10 and Eastern Visayas with seven, PNP records showed.

Goltiao said there was still time for rival politicians to enter into peace covenants even with less than a week before elections.

While the PNP remains optimistic about a peaceful elections, the Armed Forces of the Philippines has been placed on the highest alert starting Saturday.

In a press conference in Camp Aguinaldo yesterday, AFP National Capital Region Command chief Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza said he would order a deployment of 3,000 troops to the NCR to ensure peaceful elections in the area.

He explained that 2,000 are regular troops while 1,000 will be called from the reserved forces. Regular troops will provide security to polling places. Reservists will don civilian clothes and act as security in polling precincts.

Another 2,000 troops will be on standby, ready to be called into action if the need arises, Braganza said.

The AFP will be watching at least 17 barangays in Metro Manila. Three are located in Valenzuela, five in Manila—including the Commission on Elections in Intramuros—two in Taguig and seven in Quezon City.

There is no need to deploy the AFP's armored assets, Braganza said, because the security of Metro Manila residents, will be handled by the police. *With AFP*

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Second FRONT PAGE

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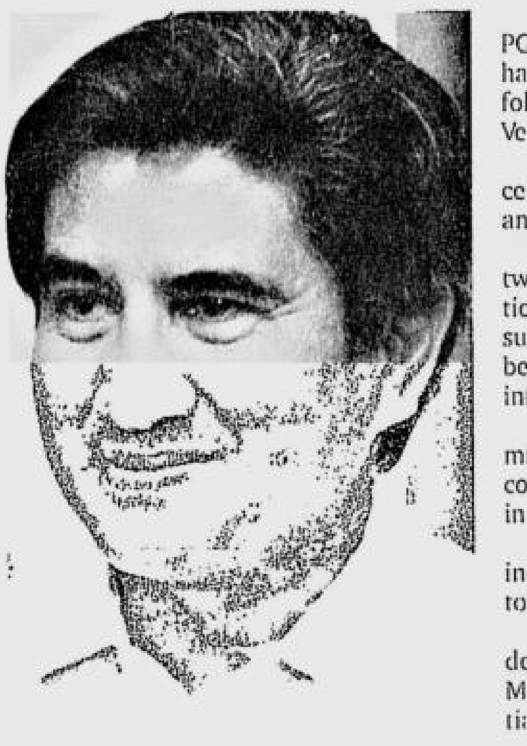

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FOUR provinces and more than 40 towns have been placed under the control of the Commission on Elections because of the intense rivalry there among those contesting the May 10 elections.

The four provinces placed under Comelec control were Masbate, Occidental Mindoro, Basilan and Sulu.

The commission has reconsidered the status of Catanduanes province, which commissioner Resurreccion Borra earlier identified as another hot spot, to be placed under Comelec control, said Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos.

Aside from the four provinces, the commission en banc yesterday also decided to place nine municipalities in the Cordillera Autonomous Region, six towns in Pangasinan, three in Ilocos Sur and two in Ilocos Norte under its control.

2 Bulacan towns

Two Bulacan towns, one in Nueva Ecija, one in Albay, three in Sorsogon and four in Camarines Sur, Danao City in Cebu, two towns each in Zamboanga del Norte and Sur, the town of Tawi-Tawi, one town in Misamis Occidental, one in Davao and one in Maguindanao were also similarly ordered placed under Comelec control.

Once an area is placed under Comelec control, a task force composed of election, military and police officials would take control of the town's day-to-day activities, including the deployment of the military and police. *Martin P. Marfil*

Bloody peaceful so far, PNP records show

By Christian V. Esguerra
and Alcuin Papa

SO FAR, it's been bloody peaceful.

As of last Monday, there were only 81 cases of political violence nationwide, a more than 200-percent drop from the 269 cases recorded during the 2001 elections, Philippine National Police records showed.

The 1998 elections were similarly bloody with 267 incidents of poll-related violence while the elections three years earlier weren't any better with 121 cases.

With only five days to go before elections, PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao yesterday dared to say that it was unlikely that this year's figures would exceed any of the last three elections'.

It was still premature to predict peaceful elections because, he told reporters. "One violent incident can easily prove us wrong."

Still, PNP figures collated since Dec. 15 were anything but alarming.

Of the 202 casualties this year, 69 were killed (24 were candidates), while 133 (nine were candidates) were injured, official police records showed. Police have marked 44 towns and cities as "hot spots" for potential violence, many of them in the central and southern Philippines, where many "partisan armed groups" operate.

Goltiao said this year's figures could have been less had it not been for the explosion at a gymnasium in Parang, Maguindanao, last Jan. 4.

That single incident killed 18 people and wounded at least 80 others, including Parang Mayor Vivencio Bataga, believed to be the target of the attack.

The 2001 elections were the most violent since 1995 with 111 people killed and 293 others wounded, the PNP reported. Of the 404 casualties, 21 politicians were killed and nine others were injured.

Goltiao attributed this year's relatively peaceful election season to stringent security measures which both the PNP and the Armed Forces have been jointly implementing since December.

Part of these measures were the establishment of checkpoints and the signing of peace covenants between warring politicians especially in areas that have a history of bloody elections.

Areas where politicians had signed peace agreements include Abra, Nueva Ecija, Negros Occidental, Mindoro, Bulacan, Bataan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Maguindanao, and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The success of peace covenants, said Goltiao, was showcased in the ARMM, usually perceived as the region most prone to political violence with 81 private armed groups believed to be working for warring clans there.

But the region has had three cases of election-related violence since December.

Topping this bracket is Bicol with 12, followed by Western Mindanao with 10 and Eastern Visayas with seven, PNP records showed.

Goltiao said there was still time for rival politicians to enter into peace covenants even with less than a week before elections.

While the PNP remains optimistic about a peaceful elections, the Armed Forces of the Philippines has been placed on the highest alert starting Saturday.

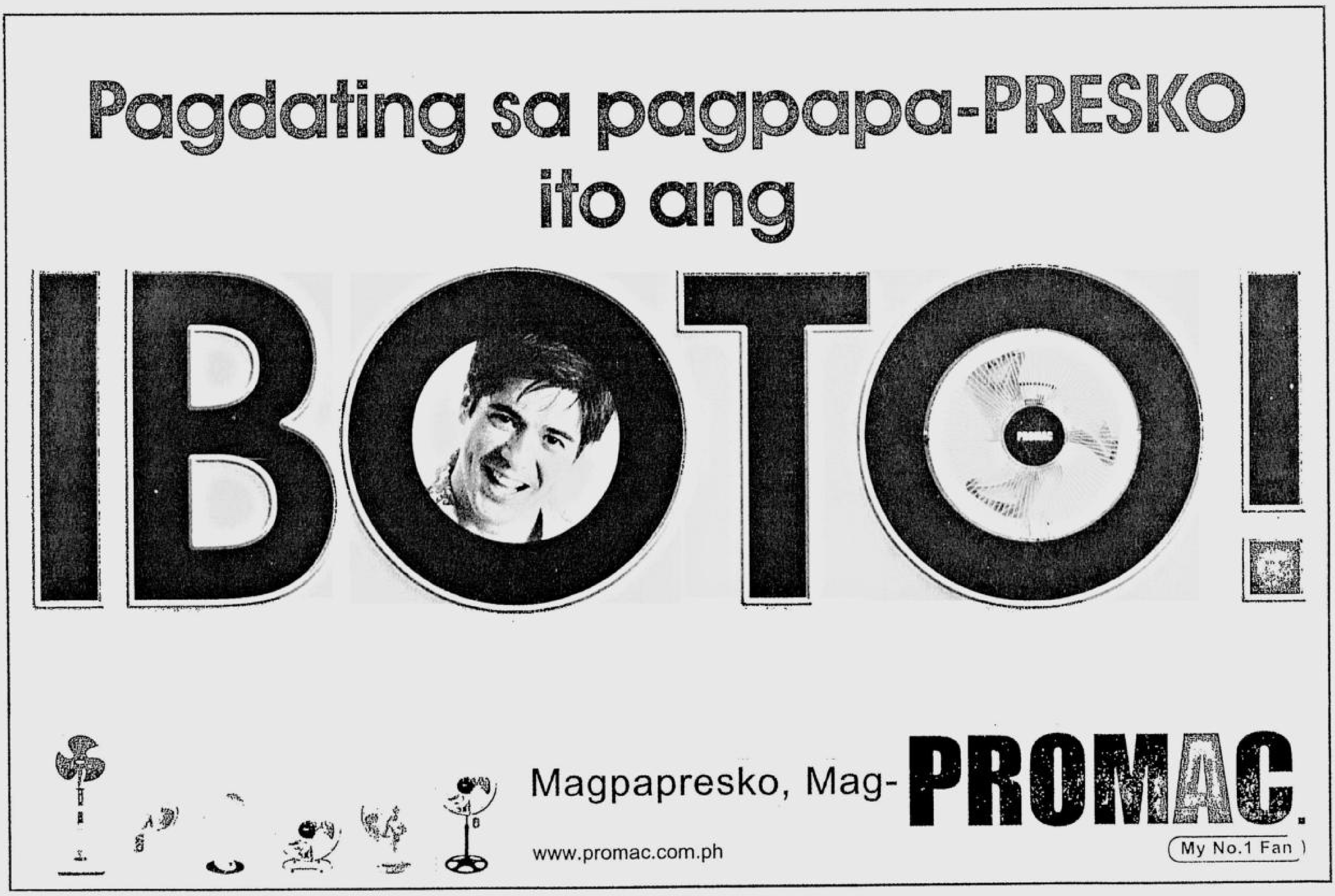
In a press conference in Camp Aguinaldo yesterday, AFP National Capital Region Command chief Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza said he would order a deployment of 3,000 troops to the NCR to ensure peaceful elections in the area.

He explained that 2,000 are regular troops while 1,000 will be called from the reserved forces. Regular troops will provide security to polling places. Reservists will don civilian clothes and act as security in polling precincts.

Another 2,000 troops will be on standby, ready to be called into action if the need arises, Braganza said.

The AFP will be watching at least 17 barangays in Metro Manila. Three are located in Valenzuela, five in Manila— including the Commission on Elections in Intramuros, two in Taguig and seven in Quezon City.

There is no need to deploy the AFP's armored assets, Braganza said, because the security of Metro Manila residents will be handled by the police. *With AFP*



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No more unity: Roco, Bro. Eddie to fight own battles

By Michael Lim Ubac

IT'S the end of the road for the unification talks between presidential candidates Raul Roco and Eddie Villanueva.

Roco, standard-bearer of Alyansa ng Pag-Asa, admitted yesterday that it was now apparent that he and Bangon Pilipinas' Eddie Villanueva had to go on separate ways to fight their own battles.

At a press conference at his house in La Vista, Quezon City, Roco said that he had wanted the spiritual leader of the Jesus Is Lord Fellowship to be his "Joseph" and "Daniel."

But after Villanueva categorically asked Roco to slide down in a separate press conference yesterday, Roco declared: "A, *wala na* (It's the end of it). It cannot be. It violates the standards of Luke 14. The one who is ready (should lead)."

Roco recalled that during his one-on-one meeting with Villanueva on April 30, he asked the latter to help him build a "moral regime."

"But we did not talk about mundane things. I did not ask him to be my vice president. He should be my Joseph. He should study it. It's not a formal position. Joseph built Egypt for the Chosen People and the Egyptians," said Roco.

He pointed out that it was impossible for him to slide down because Villanueva himself had admitted several times that Roco was the "best prepared" among the presidential candidates.

"So there is no turning back now. I came home to fight on. The people need a choice. We will not fail them. We will be there," declared Roco.

Roco declared that people from both camps who had been negotiating to finalize the alliance had prompted him to meet Villanueva "to put a fitting end" to the talks. "I arrived to practically put an end to the agenda. But I don't think he was ready to (hear) my Biblical allusions."

Roco, who calls Villanueva "friend and brother," believed that the latter was a righteous one. But in the business of government, experience and preparation would count most, he said.

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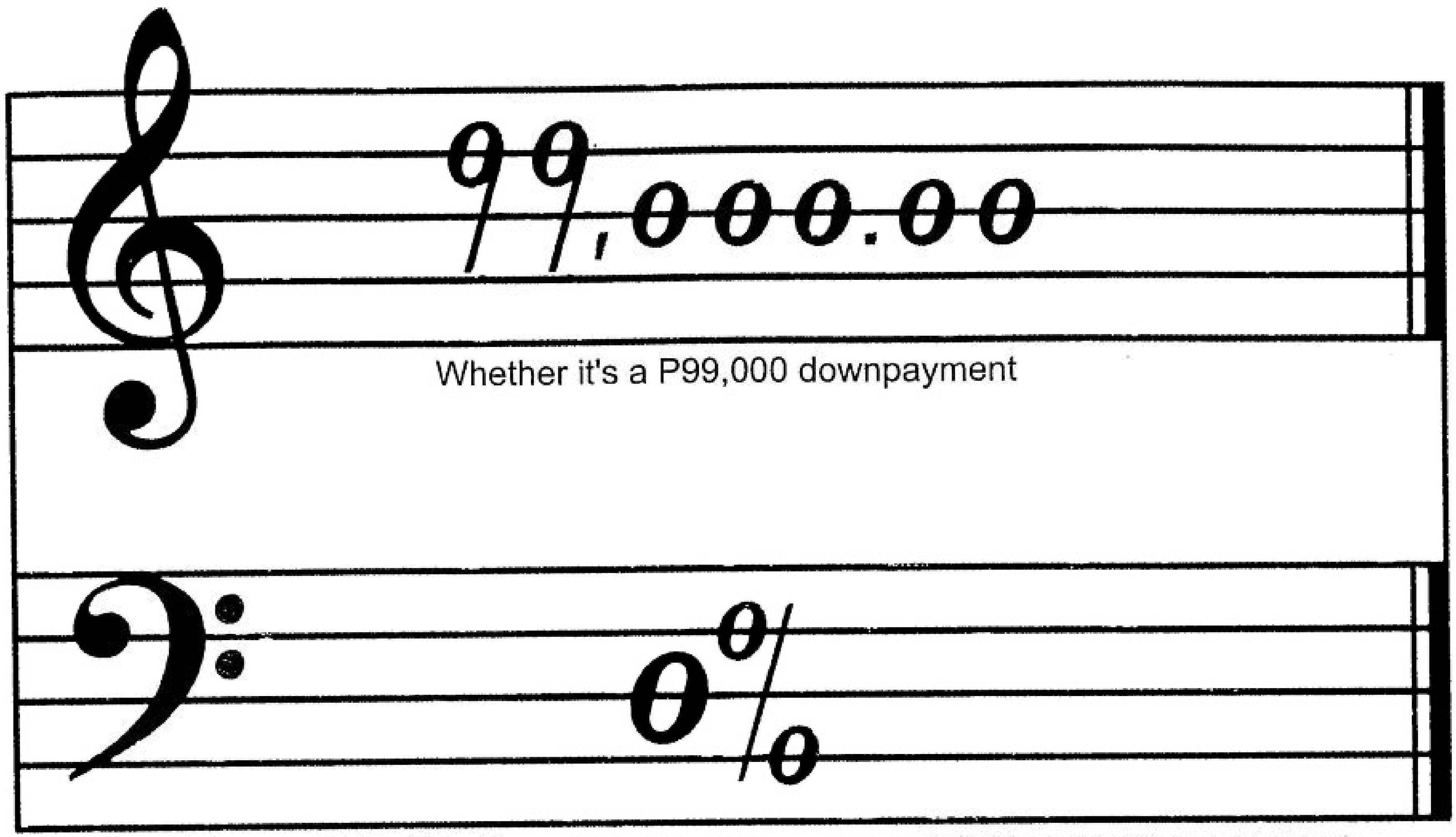

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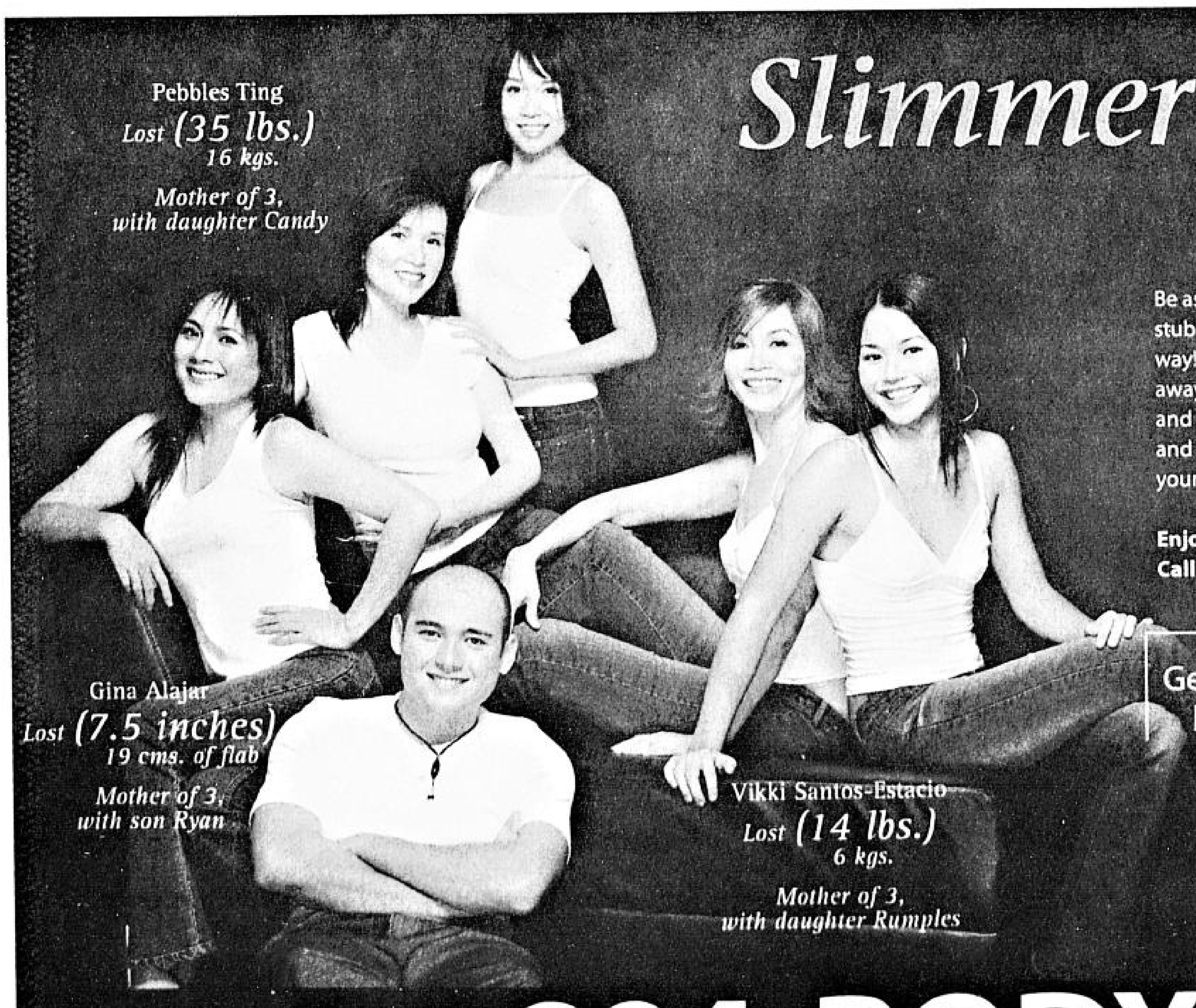

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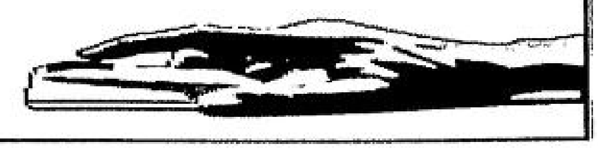

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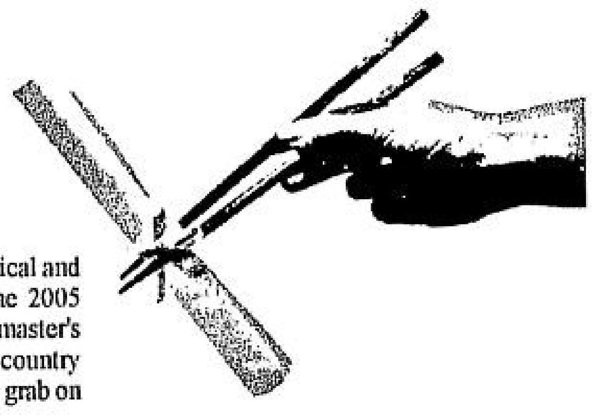

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Padded grocery list nets ex-mayor 140-year term

By Armand N. Nocum

A STIFF price to pay for an "expensive" grocery list.

For spending P800,000 in calamity funds that he used for padding the price of grocery items intended for victims of the Mayon volcano eruption in 2000, a former Albay town mayor is now facing 140 years in prison.

The Sandiganbayan yesterday found Juan G. Rivera, former municipal mayor of Guinobatan, Albay, guilty beyond reasonable doubt on 12 counts of falsification of public documents and one count of malversation of public funds. The falsification charges carry a maximum term of 10 years for each count, with the one count of malversation having a maximum jail term of 20 years.

Rivera was also ordered to pay P1,612,890 to the government as fine and restitution for the amount he stole. He was also permanently barred from holding public office.

"The court found the testimonies of the witnesses in this case to be straightforward and credible, these witnesses having no evil or improper motive to falsely testify against Rivera," the court said.

The decision was penned by Sandiganbayan fourth division Associate Justice Norberto Geraldez and concurred by the division's chair Associate Justice Gregory Ong and Associate Justice Efren de la Cruz.

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INQUIRER JOB FAIR
Over 100 companies participated in the opening of the INQUIRER Job Fair yesterday with more than 7,000 job-seekers flocking to the Glorietta Mall in Makati. Cutting the ribbon are Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas (3rd from left) and DTI Secretary Cesar Purisima (2nd from right). Others in the ribbon cutting are INQUIRER VP for marketing Donald Lim, John Clements Consultants chair Lil Domingo, John Clements president Carol Dominguez, INQUIRER chair Marixi Prieto and INQUIRER president Sandy Prieto Romualdez. The Job Fair is open until tomorrow.

Ping stumps in bailiwick for final push

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Lacson is also reeling from the Iglesia ni Cristo's reported decision to endorse the candidacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

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A district collective of the FPJ for President Movement, allegedly representing 16,000 members, even shifted loyalties to his side, according to Lacson's camp.

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By Cynthia D. Balana

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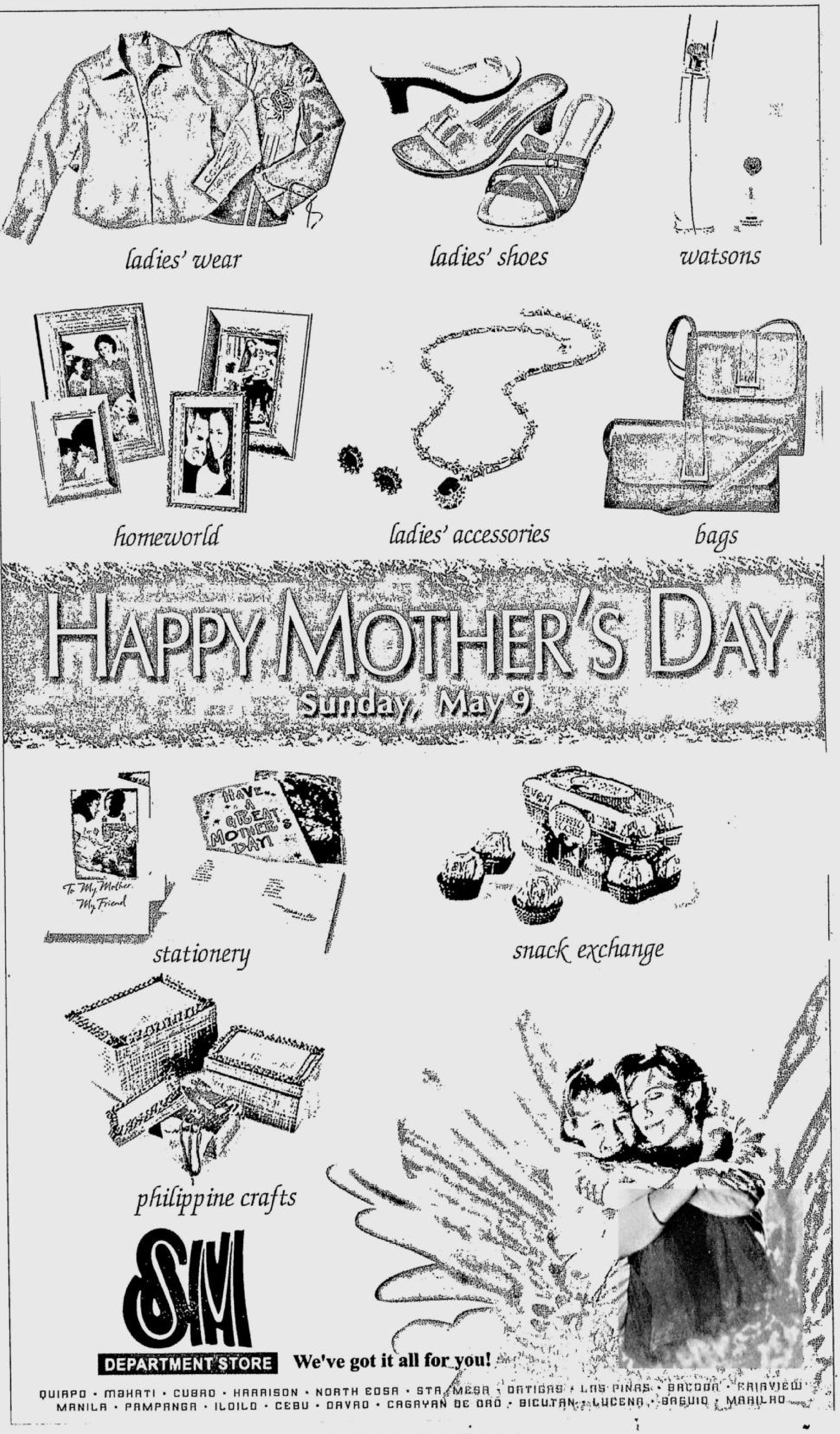
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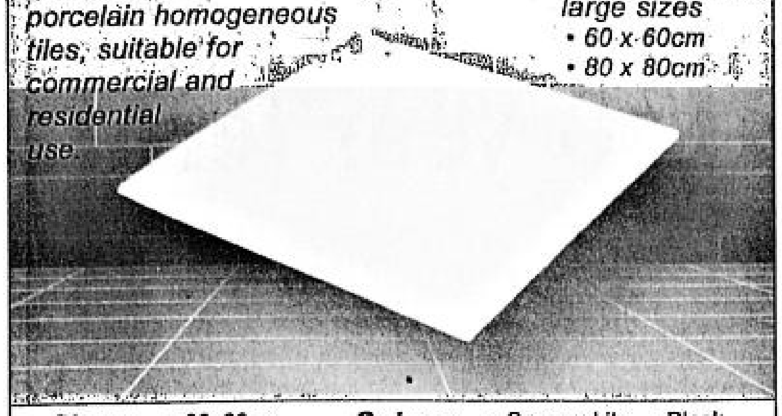

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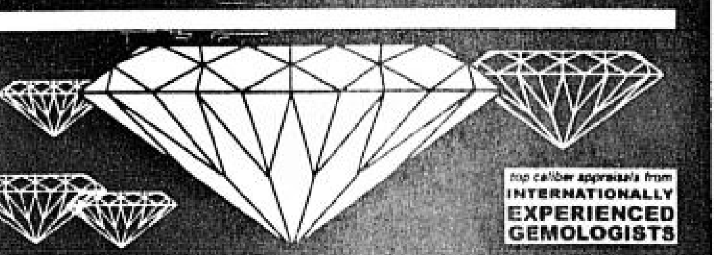

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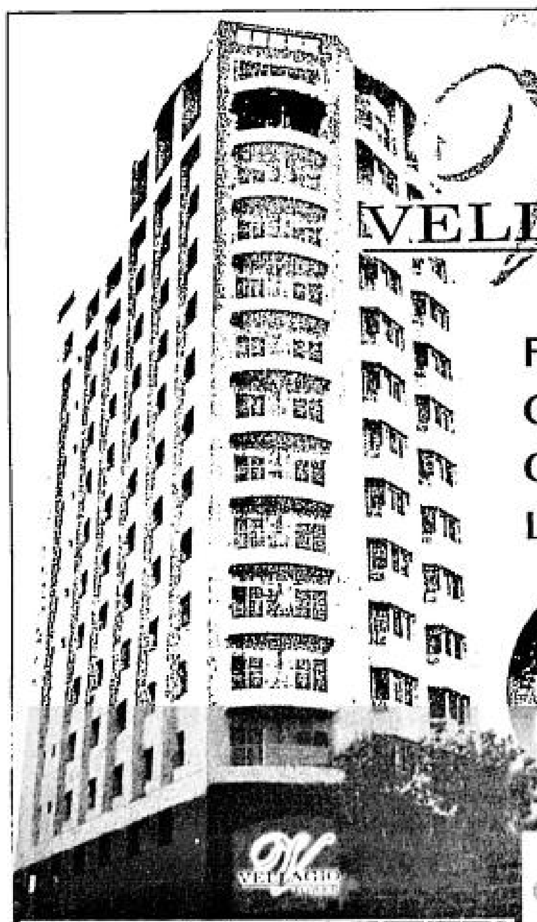

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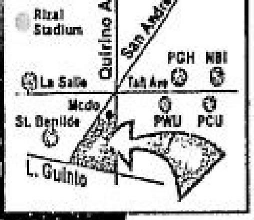

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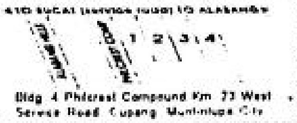

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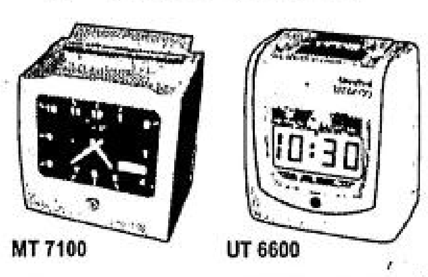

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Haydee wants proof of DAR funds misuse

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE HEAD of the Presidential Commission on Good Government yesterday said she was alarmed at allegations that the recovered Marcos ill-gotten assets are being used for the election campaign of President Macapagal-Arroyo but demanded proof of it.

PCGG chair Haydee Yorac said the accusers could always trace the money in the National Treasury which has said that the money was for the government's agrarian reform program.

"Give me proof. It's easy to make verbal accusations," Yorac said in an interview.

The PCGG, the agency tasked with the recovery of the ill-gotten assets of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, his family and associates, turned over to the National Treasury last February about P38 billion ($684 million) recovered from Marcos' secret Swiss deposits.

Biggest recovery

It was the PCGG's biggest recovery in its 17 years of existence, and the PCGG assured the Swiss government that the recovered funds would be used solely for land reform.

Farmer leaders last week claimed that the Department of Agrarian Reform was using part of the P10 billion taken from the Marcos funds for the President's pet projects which they alleged were not related to land reform.

These programs included PhilHealth cards, the President Diosdado Macapagal scholarship, water hand pumps and farm-to-market roads.

Peasant leader

Peasant leader Jaime Tadeo claimed that Malacañang recently took out half a billion pesos from the Agrarian Reform Fund to fund the "Gloria Rice" program, or the planting of the controversial hybrid rice.

The Department of Agriculture originally asked for P447 million, but the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council through a mere resolution released P544 million from the ARF, Tadeo alleged.

The recovered ill-gotten Marcos assets went into the ARF.

Yorac agreed that the use of the Marcos assets for a medical insurance program for the poor and even for farm infrastructure was "questionable."

She believes like the peasants that all of the money should be used solely for acquiring and distributing land to landless farmers.

"But we don't know. They should trace the source of the money. We don't know if the money used came from the (recovered Marcos) funds," Yorac said.

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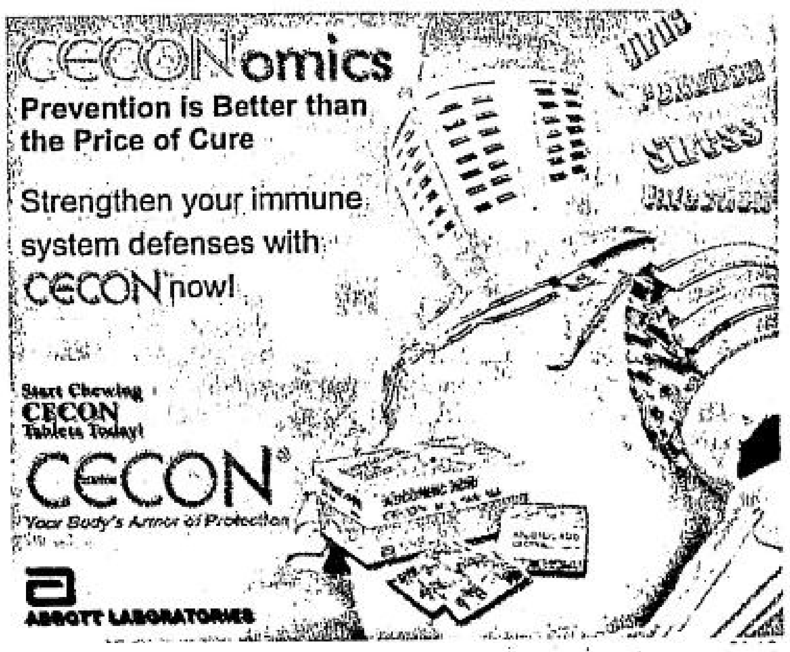

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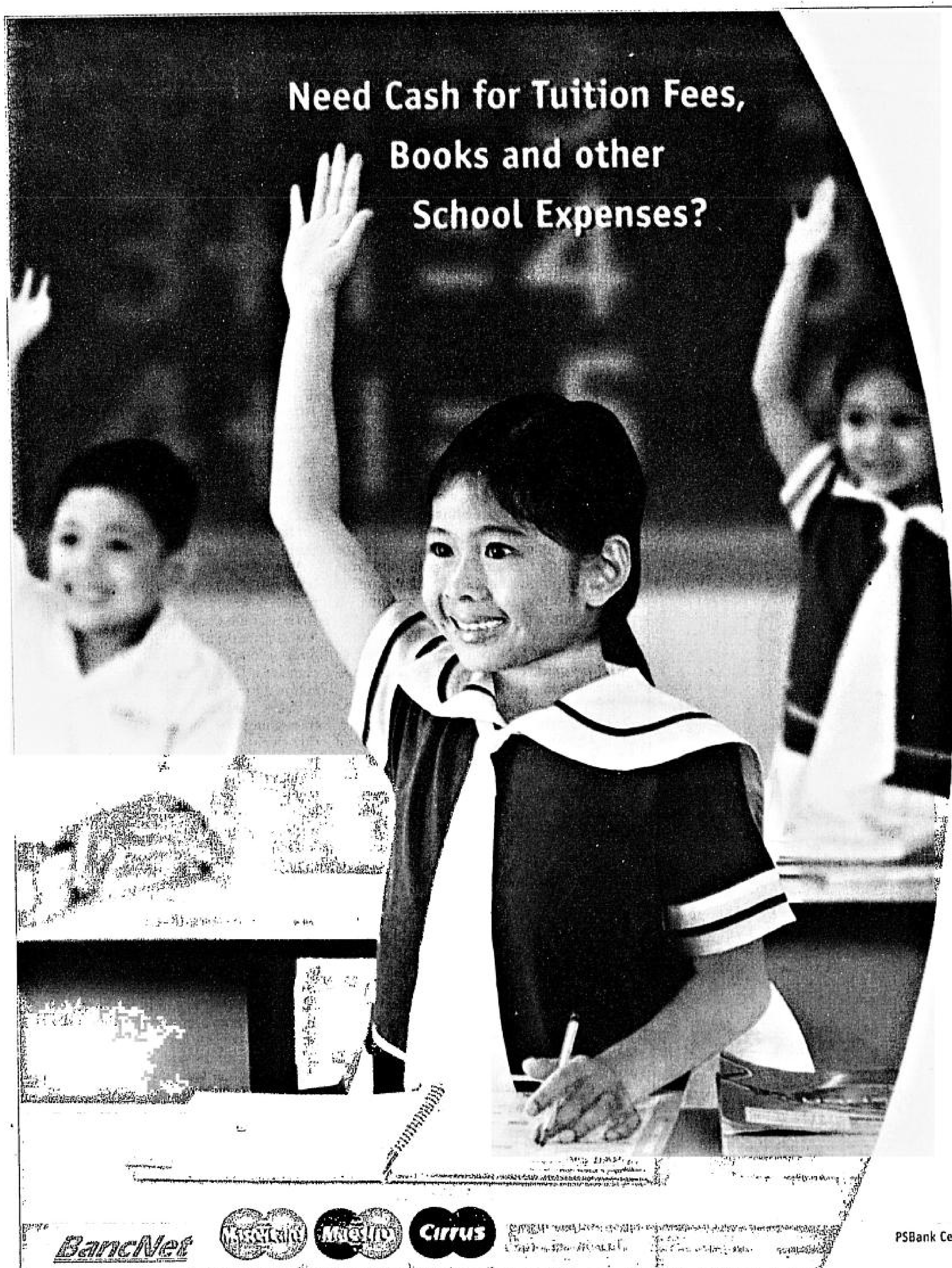

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Abu cells hunted in Metro

From page A1

the scale of the Madrid railway bombings in March.

Ms Macapagal, who is seeking a fresh six-year term on May 10, cancelled a planned campaign swing through the central and southern parts of the country this week because of what aides described as a credible terrorist threat to her life.

"I believe the life of the President is paramount and we have to exert all efforts to make sure that no untoward incident happens," her spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye, told reporters yesterday.

"We cannot give any specifics. What we can say is that we're taking all the necessary measures and we're not taking any threats lightly," he said.

Pawns

Around 50 Muslims yesterday descended on the PNP headquarters in Camp Crame to demand the release of three suspected Abu Sayyaf members detained there.

According to Amina Rasul, a member of presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.'s senatorial ticket, and officers of the Suara Bangsamoro party-list group, the three men—Redondo Cain Dellosa, Radzmar Sangkula Jul and Dawabi Ben Maulana—were being used as "pawns" in the government's anti-terror campaign.

"We're Muslims but it doesn't mean that we're second-class citizens," Rasul told the crowd at Camp Crame's Edsa gate. "Authorities can't just pick us up without any warrant. There should be due process."

She said the Mabini group of human rights lawyers led by Rene Saguisag had agreed to assist the three men in fighting the criminal charges filed against them.

Goltiao, however, told reporters that the arrest of Dellosa, Jul and Maulana was legitimate.

"We have witnesses and warrants. We should all just settle this case in court," he said.

No terrorists

Radzmar Sangkula Jul was arrested in Fairview, Quezon City, on March 26 and is believed to be part of the Abu Sayyaf cell assigned to conduct bomb attacks in Metro Manila.

Police intelligence officers said Redondo Cain Dellosa was a Muslim convert who was arrested after he allegedly admitted to his companions that he had bombed the SuperFerry 14.

They said all the members of the supposed cell had been arrested except for one still carrying some of the TNT explosives used in the ferry bombing.

But according to Suara Bangsamoro leader Amirah Ali Lidasan, Jul was a biochemistry student at the Mindanao State Univesity in Marawi City.

She said his classmates and professors had launched the "Free Radzmar Now! Movement" to condemn the young man's arrest.

Lidasan said Dellosa had been tortured into admitting his purported role in the ferry bombing.

She also said Dawabi Ben Maulana was no terrorist but a respected leader in Barangay Culiat, a Muslim enclave in Quezon City, and a provincial coordinator for vice presidential candidate Sen. Noli de Castro and the Suara Bangsamoro.

Maulana was among the 12 Culiat residents arrested on April 28 for allegedly raising funds for the Abu Sayyaf through drug trafficking.

Police claimed that high-powered firearms and ammonium nitrate, an ingredient in bomb-making, had been seized from those arrested.

Links with JI

Braganza said the supposed Abu Sayyaf members in Metro Manila were being supervised by the Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiya (JI), a terror group with ties to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

He said the interrogation of Alhasar Mantad Limbong, alias Kosovo, who was arrested last month, showed that the latter had connections with the JI.

"The Abu Sayyaf is being supervised by the JI because Kosovo is linked to the JI," he said.

Braganza called the press conference after police tightened security in strategic areas in Metro Manila following the discovery of a new terrorist plot with the arrest of two suspected Abu Sayyaf members in Manila on Saturday.

Police arrested Quirino Bandon and Arjie Sama at a police checkpoint near the Commission on Elections building on Cabildo Street in Intramuros.

The arresting officers discovered an improvised 60-mm mortar bomb ready for detonation using a cellular phone.

United front

Also yesterday, Braganza formally convened the NCR Security Coordinating Committee, which is composed of the PNP, other law enforcement agencies and private business groups.

The aim of the committee is to put up a "united front" against terrorism by coordinating the sharing of information and expertise among officials, civic groups and corporations, as well as private and government establishments within the NCR, he said.

Those present were representatives of utility companies and commercial, industrial and business establishments, hotel administrators, representatives of the Metro Manila Development Authority, transport officials, security officials of subdivisions and villages, and owners of security agencies. *With an AFP report*

'Dolce Vita' killings shock Boracay folk

From page A1

visited Boracay last year, 14,486 of them Europeans. Tourist arrivals have steadily increased over the past five years despite worldwide terror threats and the outbreak of the deadly Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in the region.

A friend of one of the victims, who did not want to be identified, said the expatriate community on the island was stunned.

"Boracay is a small community and every one knows one another and something like this does affect us all," he said.

Lara Salaver, president of the Boracay Foundation Inc. (BFI), condemned the killings. She said the BFI hoped the crime would be solved soon because this might scare off foreign tourists. BFI is composed of owners of resorts, restaurants and other businesses on the island.

Manfred Schoeni was found dead in the three-story mansion of Anton Faustenhauser, a German, in Malay town, Aklan. The mansion, called Dolce Vita, has a commanding view of the island famed for its white sand beaches.

Faustenhauser, owner of a spa and hotel in Germany, was found lying on the floor in the master bedroom.

Another guest, John Cowperthwait, a Briton, was found in another room. Cowperthwait was an architect, according to a message from the German consular office.

Faustenhauser's Filipino maid, Erma Sarmiento, was found dead in her room on the ground floor. The bodies of the victims bore multiple stab wounds, the police said.

Schoeni headed an international consortium that owns Ashanti vineyards. The Ashanti Wine Estate is located beneath the peaks of the Klein Drakenstein mountain range in Paarl.

The estate comprises 165 hectares, of which 95 hectares are planted mostly to noble red varieties, according to the company website (www.ashantwines.com).

Schoeni was also one of the leading art and antique dealers in Hong Kong, according to a one-page fax message sent by Peter Bichelmeir, manager of Big Woods Transport Co., which is based in Manila, to Philippine National Police Deputy Director General Edgardo Aglipay. A copy of the message was sent to the Boracay Special Protection Unit (BSPU). Faustenhauser was a friend of Bichelmeir.

Suspects

The decomposing bodies of the victims were discovered at about 5:30 p.m. on Monday after Faustenhauser's friend, Patrick Higgs, went to the house upon the request of the German's wife, Josephine, who was in Manila.

Josephine asked Higgs to check on her husband after she failed to reach him since Sunday, according to Supt. Remus Zacarias Canieso, BSPU commander.

Higgs peeked into the window of the servant's room and saw Sarmiento sprawled on the floor. He immediately called the police.

The police on Tuesday questioned 25 construction workers to shed light on the gruesome killings. Canieso said the BSPU took the fingerprints of the workers, who were building a house beside Faustenhauser's mansion.

Police investigators are eyeing robbery as the motive for the killings. Canieso said the house was in disarray "as if the suspects were looking for something."

Canieso said the workers were the "probable suspects," but he said they were just invited for questioning and not arrested. They were still being questioned by investigators as of 4 p.m. yesterday.

The workers had been constructing a swimming pool and a rest house and clearing the hilly area beside the mansion at Sitio Bulabog in Barangay Balabag, one of the three villages of the island resort.

The mansion sits near the top of Mt. Luho, an isolated area overlooking the island on the opposite side of the white beach stretch. It is far from other houses.

A friend of Faustenhauser said that from a distance the house of the German looked like a red Mexican hat with a tiled roof. "The second floor, where the bodies were found, has magnificent views."

He said Faustenhauser, 69, finished the house about 14 months ago and was subdividing his one-hectare lot into building blocks. Schoeni was building a villa next door.

Bread knives

Canieso said two bread knives believed to be the murder weapons were found by investigators in the bathroom of the master bedroom.

Investigators from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, the Police Regional Office-6 based in Iloilo City and the Aklan provincial police office in the capital town of Kalibo helped the BSPU in its investigation at the crime scene yesterday.

The investigation was suspended, however, upon the request of the members of the family of Faustenhauser's wife, who were expected to arrive in Boracay yesterday with investigators from the National Bureau of Investigation office in Manila.

Schoeni and Cowperthwait arrived on Boracay Island on May 1 from Hong Kong. Schoeni was German-born with Swiss parents and was based in Hong Kong where he operated wine bar-cum-art galleries and restaurants. He also had wine shops in Beijing and Shanghai.

"After finishing his military service, Schoeni earned a degree in hotel management from the Heidelberg Hotel School in Germany and took a job as night manager at the Intercontinental Hotel in Hanover," according to an article posted on its website (www.winebusiness.com)

He worked in hotels in South Africa, Germany, Hong Kong, Thailand, the Philippines and Pakistan.

In 1997, Schoeni, along with other investors, bought a vineyard in Paarl which was part of the 95-hectare vineyard in Klein Drakenstein that produced only grapes and not wines, according to the article.

After buying the vineyard, Schoeni renamed it Ashanti. The article said Ashanti wines included Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc, blush Cabernet/Pinotage, late harvest Malbec Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Pinotage and Vin de Paille.

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LET US NOT ALLOW MALICIOUS RUMORS TO KILL OUR SPIRIT. I STRONGLY URGE EVERYONE TO REMAIN VIGILANT IN ORDER TO ENSURE A CLEAN AND HONEST ELECTION SO THAT THE PEOPLE'S WILL MAY PREVAIL. THE OVERWHELMING SUPPORT YOU HAVE SHOWN ASSURES ME OF OUR VICTORY COME ELECTION DAY.

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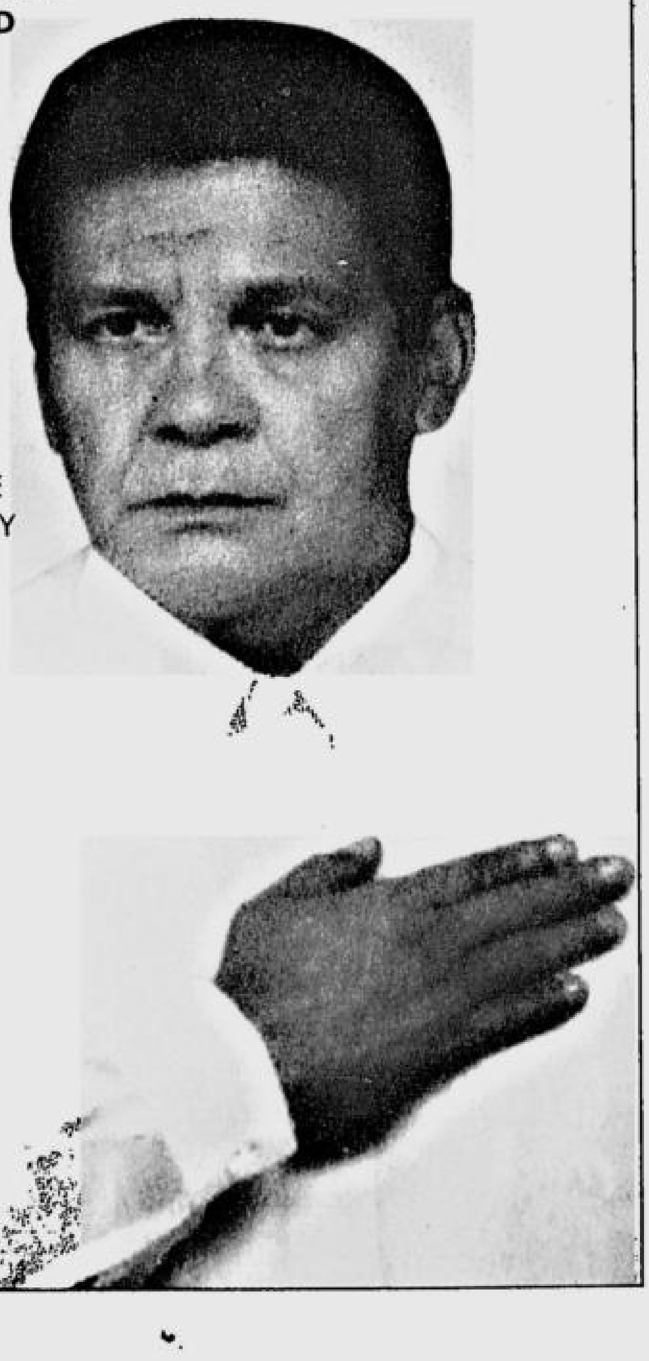

KILOS PARA SA BAGONG UMAGA

Stolen ballots raise fears ...

From page A1

a senator, not even—I think—a mayor," Abalos said.

The loss of the ballots came amid the opposition's warning of possible massive cheating because of the extra one million ballots that the Comelec had printed.

Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr., a policy adviser of opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., said the extra ballots and the decision of the Comelec not to clean up padded voters' lists in many areas were "very ominous, interlocking indications that wholesale fraud could take place."

An opposition lawyer said the Comelec could even engage in trending with its plan to conduct a quick count.

Sixto Brilliantes Jr. yesterday asked the Supreme Court to stop the poll body from conducting its own unofficial "quick count" of the election results to prevent "trending" in the counting of the votes.

Brillantes said the April 28 Comelec resolution that allowed the poll body to conduct its own "very quick" count should be voided to prevent widespread confusion after the voting.

The poll body's quick count, dubbed Very-Quick Comelec ET, is purportedly tamper-proof and will be done through the electronic transmission of advanced election results for all elective positions. This is apart from the Comelec's official count, which takes weeks.

Even before the Comelec could determine the culprit behind the missing ballots, Abalos surmised that the opposition could use the loss of the ballots to discredit the poll body.

"What I'm afraid is that these would be shown to (bolster allegations) that the Comelec is cheating," he said.

"What could be the purpose behind this? (Maybe) to be used as a pattern for ballot printing ... or probably, I'm more inclined to say that the opposition will start saying that it has ballots to prove that there is cheating to discredit again the Comelec," Abalos said.

He said the ballots were for several areas in Metro Manila that he considered opposition bailiwicks.

The missing ballots, which Abalos said were in booklets of 500s, were supposed to be delivered to Pasig, Makati, Quezon City's second district, Caloocan City and Pasay City's first and second districts and the fifth district of Manila.

But Commissioner Florentino Tuason said the missing ballots were in booklets of 100s and that these were to be delivered to the cities of Pasig, Pasay, Makati and Marawi.

Tuason said the Comelec discovered the missing ballots on Thursday and announced it yesterday for "transparency."

Abalos said the Comelec could easily notify its supervisors in the areas where the ballots were to be distributed about the loss and nullify the ballots. The ballots have security features.

Guingona wanted an assurance from the Comelec that the extra ballots would not be stuffed into ballot boxes to favor certain local and national candidates.

Election Commissioner Resurreccion Borra said half of the unused ballots would be destroyed while the other half would be kept by the election officer for "accounting."

"The excess ballots will be torn up by the BEIs and one will be placed in an envelope to be placed in the ballot box and the other one will be given to the election officer for purposes of accounting later on," he said.

"So, it's safe. It can't be used for any other purpose," Borra said.

Borra the other day admitted that the poll body had printed 44,551,551 ballots for 43.5 million voters.

He said the Comelec printed additional ballots after realizing that it needed to allocate three ballots per precinct for the three members of the Board of Election Inspectors so they could vote in the precincts where they are assigned.

There are about 216,000 precincts throughout the country but Borra said the Comelec's "working figure" was 250,000 precincts "to be safe."

Asked if the members of the BEIs were not included in the 43.5 million registered voters, Borra said the inspectors were registered but were assigned to other places.

Guingona also expressed concern over the sub-contracting of the printing of Certificates of Canvass and Certificates of Election Returns, which he said could lead to the overprinting of these election forms.

All this "appears to clear the way for *'dagdag-bawas'* (vote padding and shaving) in a magnitude we have never before seen," he said.

Guingona said he continued to receive reports that official voters' lists were "swelling well beyond the statistically probable margin of 10 to 15 percent," particularly in parts of Mindanao.

In some areas, he said, the number of registered voters had ballooned by 25 to 50 percent since the 2001 elections.

The Vice President urged the political parties, all civic groups and voters to support the Coalition for Honest and Peaceful Elections and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines in denouncing and guarding against election fraud.

A group of retired military and police officers called on former President Fidel Ramos, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya, Philippine National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. and the Comelec to ensure clean and honest elections. *With a report from Alcuin Papa*

FPJ returns Joker's fire in Pangasinan drive

ALAMINOS, Pangasinan—Opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday took potshots at Sen. Joker Arroyo for urging the citizenry to "take a chance" on President Macapagal-Arroyo whose government he admits is reeking with corruption and mismanagement.

Speaking before a big crowd of supporters here, Poe said Senator Arroyo had doubts about his own statement of support to the "corrupt" government of Ms Macapagal, according to a press statement from the media bureau of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

Poe said the senator was urging the people to take a chance at a government which, in three years, implemented "a platform of mismanagement and corruption."

Poe was in Pangasinan for a two-day sweep that covered Lingayen, Bugallon, Aguilar, Mangatarem, Urbiztondo, San Carlos, Basista, Bayambang, Malasique, Calasiao, Dagupan City, Mangaldan, San Fabian, San Jacinto, Manaoag, Pozorrubio, Binalonnan, Asingan, Villasis and Urdaneta City.

In another press release, the Poe camp said the movie star would win by a landslide in Pangasinan alone. The province is expected to deliver one million votes to Poe, it said.

Pangasinan, Poe's home province, is a known bailiwick of two of President Macapagal's top supporters—Speaker Jose de Venecia and former President Fidel Ramos.

The KNP standard-bearer said the country experienced its worst economic period under Ms Macapagal's administration and "now they're still taking a chance on GMA."

Senator Arroyo had called on voters to choose President Macapagal—despite persistent allegations of corruption against her—over Poe whom he described as "plain hopeless."

Poe said, "We promised the people a clean and honest administration, unlike the corrupt Arroyo regime."

He urged his audience here to end "this culture of corruption, patronage and influence which are the main reasons why basic services are not delivered to the citizenry."

"My platform for the first 100 days? It's peace, food security and education," he said.

Poe vowed to "expel the corrupt minions of Arroyo" in the government and charge them before the courts.

3 killed in Bataan shootout

BATAAN—Three ward leaders of Bataan Gov. Leonardo Roman and and his rival, Rep. Enrique Garcia, were killed on Tuesday in a shootout inside a cockpit at Barangay San Isidro here, police said.

Police said the victims were Ireneo Macayugay alias Alakdan, and Alex Aguas and Jimmy Roy, both of Mariveles.

Aguas reportedly belonged to a group of Macayugay whom Roman described as his sympathizer. Roy was a leader of Garcia.

Garcia, who is running for governor, said initial reports reaching him said that Macayugay's group attacked Roy's companions.

Roman, who is seeking a House seat for Bataan's second district, told the INQUIRER by phone that the incident was "definitely politically motivated because my rival (Garcia) is already desperate."

Garcia blamed the police for the incident. He said his request to change the provincial police director, Senior Supt. Sahirom Salim, went unheeded. Salim, Garcia added, has bias for Roman.

The police, however, traced the killings to a fight over the license to operate the cockpit. "The two groups had personal grudges against each other when the business permit for the operation of the cockpit was passed from Roy to Alakdan," a police report said.

Chief Supt. Vidal Querol, Central Luzon police director, did not immediately link the incident to the rivalry between Roman and Garcia. *Tonette Orejas and Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk and Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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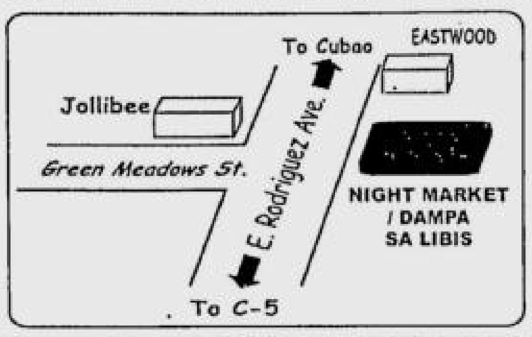

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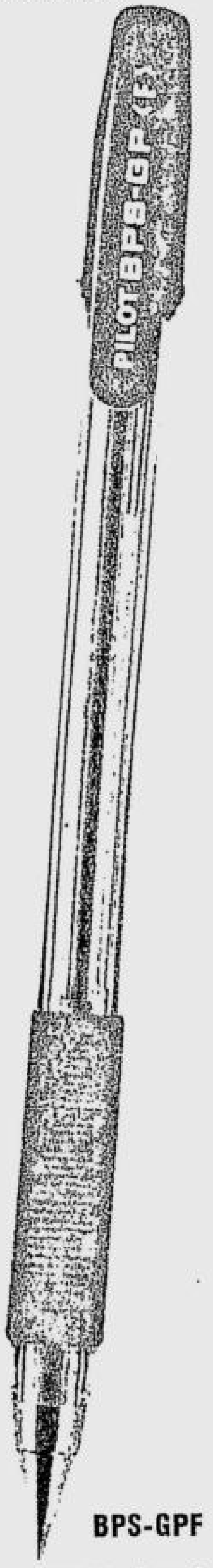

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Pro-Gloria caravan ends in Metro today

THE CARAVAN called the "Biyaheng Gloria" reaches the end of the road today at the Liwasang Bonifacio after a 45-day trek from both ends of the country with organizers promising a welcoming committee of 50,000 and the signatures of millions of supporters of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Biyaheng Gloria is now in Manila to celebrate the bandwagon of support for our candidate, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo," said caravan spokesperson Robert Bastillo in a press statement.

He said the highlights of the celebration include a human chain of 10,000 pro-Gloria campaigners that would cover the stretch of Taft Avenue in Pasay City and España Avenue in Quezon City and Manila and the grand finals of the popular Glorias Look-Alike contest.

The caravan from northern and southern Philippines will converge at the Liwasang Bonifacio.

Bastillo said the candidates of the look-alike search would join the motorcade from Quirino Avenue in Manila and Welcome Rotunda in Quezon City.

The Biyaheng Gloria caravan, Bastillo said, toured Northern Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Central Luzon and the Bicol provinces as well as big areas of Visayas and Mindanao. It covered 40 major provinces with a total voting population of 36 million.

Bastillo said the caravan, which also included market tours, small town hall meetings and a signature campaign, was held to popularize the accomplishments of President Macapagal in different parts of the country.

Alex Cauguiran, secretary general of Pro-Gloria (Progressive and Responsible Organizations for Genuine Leadership, Outstanding Reforms and Intelligent Action) said initial reports coming from the provinces indicated that the signature campaign for Gloria would exceed the 3 million target.

"The bandwagon for President Macapagal is real. Ordinary people line up in our signature campaign centers to signify their support to the President," Cauguiran said.

Cauguiran explained that the signatures would prove that their group is capable of securing 13.5 million votes for President Macapagal in Monday's elections.

This action star is for GMA, Dick

By Margaux Ortiz and Christine Avendaño

ALTHOUGH HE can't vote, international action star Steven Seagal has put in a good word for President Macapagal-Arroyo and senatorial candidate Richard Gordon, saying he was a big fan of both.

In a press conference at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel the other night, Seagal described Ms Macapagal as "a wonderful human being and a great strategist."

"I have always been a big fan of hers," Seagal said. "My family and friends feel the President has handled a lot of difficult crises with extreme caution and intelligent strategy."

He said Ms Macapagal had done a great job with the Philippines and her endeavors "are not only effective but fruitful for the people."

"*Sino ba yun* (Who's he)?" opposition presidential bet Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday shrugged off Seagal's virtual endorsement of President Macapagal.

Poe, himself an action movie star, told reporters there was a law banning foreigners from endorsing candidates.

"*Di bale, tatapatan na lang ni Amay Bisaya yan* (Never mind, we'll pit Amay Bisaya against him)," he said, referring to the local character actor who is one of his supporters.

Hearing about the endorsement, KNP senatorial candidate Francisco Tatad said, "Foreigners may not interfere in the elections, whether it comes in the form of money, political endorsements or whatever."

As for Gordon, Seagal described him as "an intelligent human being who is very well-versed in world politics."

"I've only had a couple of days to get to know him but what I know I like," he said.

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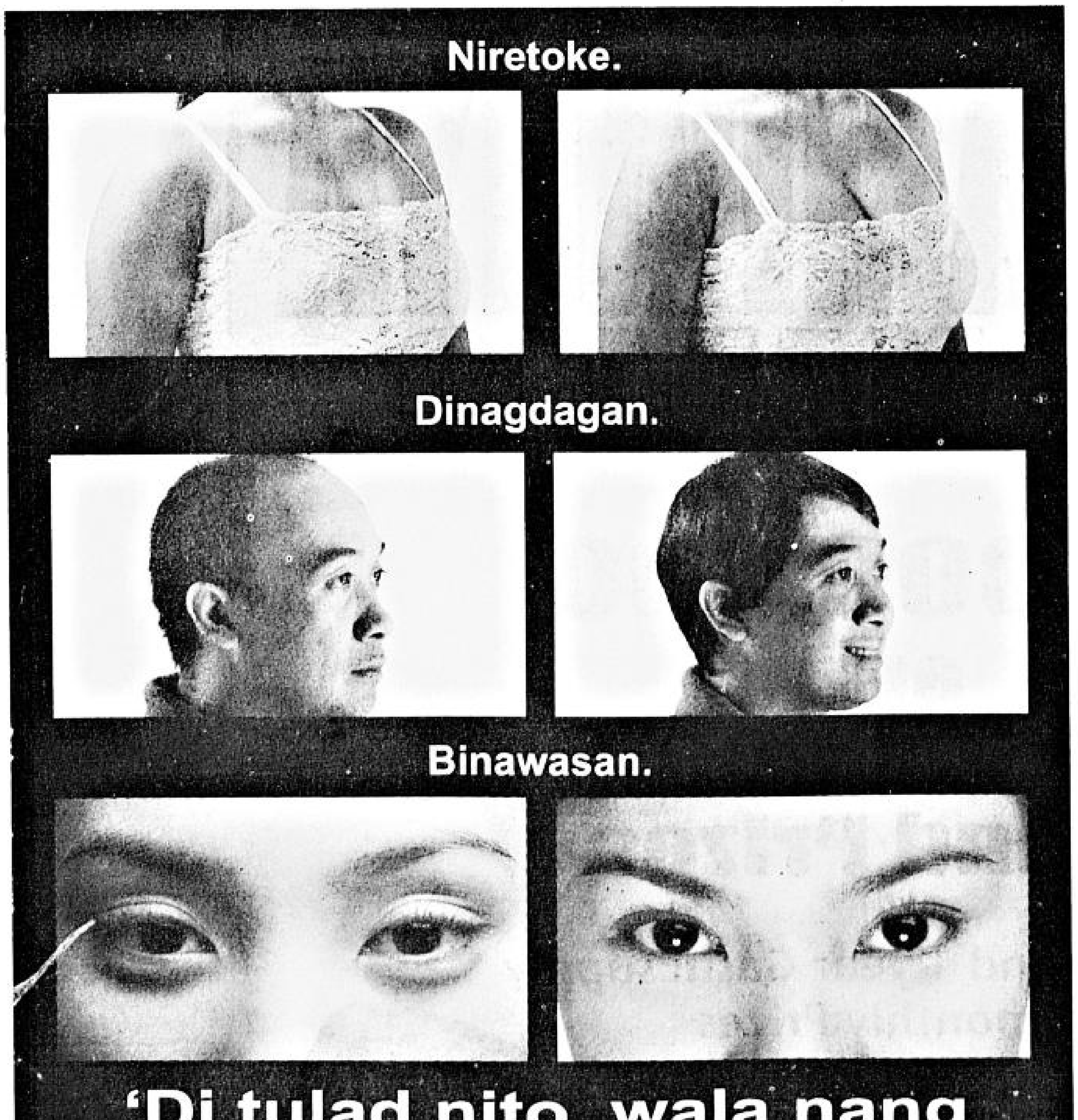
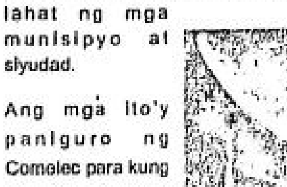


'Di tulad nito, wala nang dagdag-bawas sa boto mo.

Halalan 2004

Eleksyon na naman. 'Di piring ang ating mga mata sa mga pandarayang tulad ng dagdag-bawas. Dahil dito, 'di lalabas ang tunay na tinig ng tao.

Ngayon, sa Halalan 2004, may sistema ang Comelec laban sa dagdag-bawas. Gagamit ng mga computers para makuha, at TV monitoring para mabantayan ang bilangan. May VSAT kung saan gagamit ng *satellite transmission* para masiguradong ligtas at mabilis ang pagpapadala ng boto sa lahat ng mga munisipyo at siyudad.



Ang mga ito'y paniguro ng Comelec para kung anong ibinoto ay siya ring bibilangin.

"Boto ating bantayan. Taumbayan, Comelec inyong tulungan upang makamtan malinis na halalan."

– Hon. Benjamin S. Abalos
Chairman, COMELEC

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Pentagon probes abuse of Iraqi prisoners

WASHINGTON—The Pentagon said it was pursuing five separate investigations into allegations of abuse of Iraqi prisoners.

One, launched in mid-April, delves into interrogation methods of US military intelligence officers in Iraq.

President George W. Bush urged Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld Monday to ensure that American soldiers found guilty of "shameful and appalling acts" be punished.

A Pentagon spokesperson said that "It's going to take some time to sort through exactly what the facts were."

A top aide to Bush, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the president wants a report on his desk quickly about the extent of prisoner abuse found by the Pentagon.

Members of Congress also pushed for swift action. The chair of the Senate armed services committee, Virginia Sen. John Warner, summoned Pentagon officials to face his panel Tuesday.

"These allegations of mistreatment, if proven, represent an appalling and totally unacceptable breach of military conduct that could undermine much of the courageous work and sacrifice by our forces in the war on terror," Warner said.

Another Republican, Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, feared that photos depicting Iraqi prisoners in US custody apparently being sexually humiliated and physically abused, which have been widely broadcast on TV in recent days, could incite more violence against American troops in Iraq.

Faced with a growing public-relations headache, Bush aides were trying to convince their Arab counterparts that the abuses were the exception, not the rule.

The British newspaper The Daily Mirror has published photos showing a hooded Iraqi being pushed, threatened and urinated on by a British soldier. The British military police are investigating and have not commented on the authenticity of the pictures.

The UN special investigator on torture, Theo van Boven, issued a statement late Monday expressing serious concern about the reports of torture and "other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment" of Iraqis detained by US and British forces.

The statement said torture was explicitly prohibited by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international accords and called on all nations with forces serving in Iraq to take prompt and effective steps to investigate, prosecute and punish anyone guilty of violations as well as to provide reparations for victims.

In an effort to contain the mounting controversy, Larry Di Rita, Rumsfeld's chief spokesperson, provided a timeline of US military responses to the reported instances of abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad.

He said the abuse, alleged to have happened last fall, was reported to US military commanders on Jan. 13 by a soldier in the 800th Military Police Brigade, commanded by Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski of the Army Reserve.

A criminal investigation was launched the next day by the US military command in Baghdad, headed by Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez.

On Jan. 19 Sanchez requested a high-level review of practices and procedures at detention and interrogation centers; on Jan. 31 the review was begun, under direction of Maj. Gen. Antonio M. Taguba. He finished it March 3.

In early February the Army inspector general began a review of US detention facilities throughout Iraq and Afghanistan, at about the time the chief of the Army Reserve, Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly, began an assessment of training for his MPs and military intelligence personnel. *AP*

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Pentagon probes abuse of Iraqi prisoners

WASHINGTON—The Pentagon said it was pursuing five separate investigations into allegations of abuse of Iraqi prisoners.

One, launched in mid-April, delves into interrogation methods of US military intelligence officers in Iraq.

President George W. Bush urged Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld Monday to ensure that American soldiers found guilty of "shameful and appalling acts" be punished.

A Pentagon spokesperson said that "It's going to take some time to sort through exactly what the facts were."

A top aide to Bush, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the president wants a report on his desk quickly about the extent of prisoner abuse found by the Pentagon.

Members of Congress also pushed for swift action. The chair of the Senate armed services committee, Virginia Sen. John Warner, summoned Pentagon officials to face his panel Tuesday.

"These allegations of mistreatment, if proven, represent an appalling and totally unacceptable breach of military conduct that could undermine much of the courageous work and sacrifice by our forces in the war on terror," Warner said.

Another Republican, Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, feared that photos depicting Iraqi prisoners in US custody apparently being sexually humiliated and physically abused, which have been widely broadcast on TV in recent days, could incite more violence against American troops in Iraq.

Faced with a growing public-relations headache, Bush aides were trying to convince their Arab counterparts that the abuses were the exception, not the rule.

The British newspaper The Daily Mirror has published photos showing a hooded Iraqi being pushed, threatened and urinated on by a British soldier. The British military police are investigating and have not commented on the authenticity of the pictures.

The UN special investigator on torture, Theo van Boven, issued a statement late Monday expressing serious concern about the reports of torture and "other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment" of Iraqis detained by US and British forces.

The statement said torture was explicitly prohibited by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international accords and called on all nations with forces serving in Iraq to take prompt and effective steps to investigate, prosecute and punish anyone guilty of violations as well as to provide reparations for victims.

In an effort to contain the mounting controversy, Larry Di Rita, Rumsfeld's chief spokesperson, provided a timeline of US military responses to the reported instances of abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad.

He said the abuse, alleged to have happened last fall, was reported to US military commanders on Jan. 13 by a soldier in the 800th Military Police Brigade, commanded by Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski of the Army Reserve.

A criminal investigation was launched the next day by the US military command in Baghdad, headed by Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez.

On Jan. 19 Sanchez requested a high-level review of practices and procedures at detention and interrogation centers; on Jan. 31 the review was begun, under direction of Maj. Gen. Antonio M. Taguba. He finished it March 3.

In early February the Army inspector general began a review of US detention facilities throughout Iraq and Afghanistan, at about the time the chief of the Army Reserve, Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly, began an assessment of training for his MPs and military intelligence personnel. *AP*

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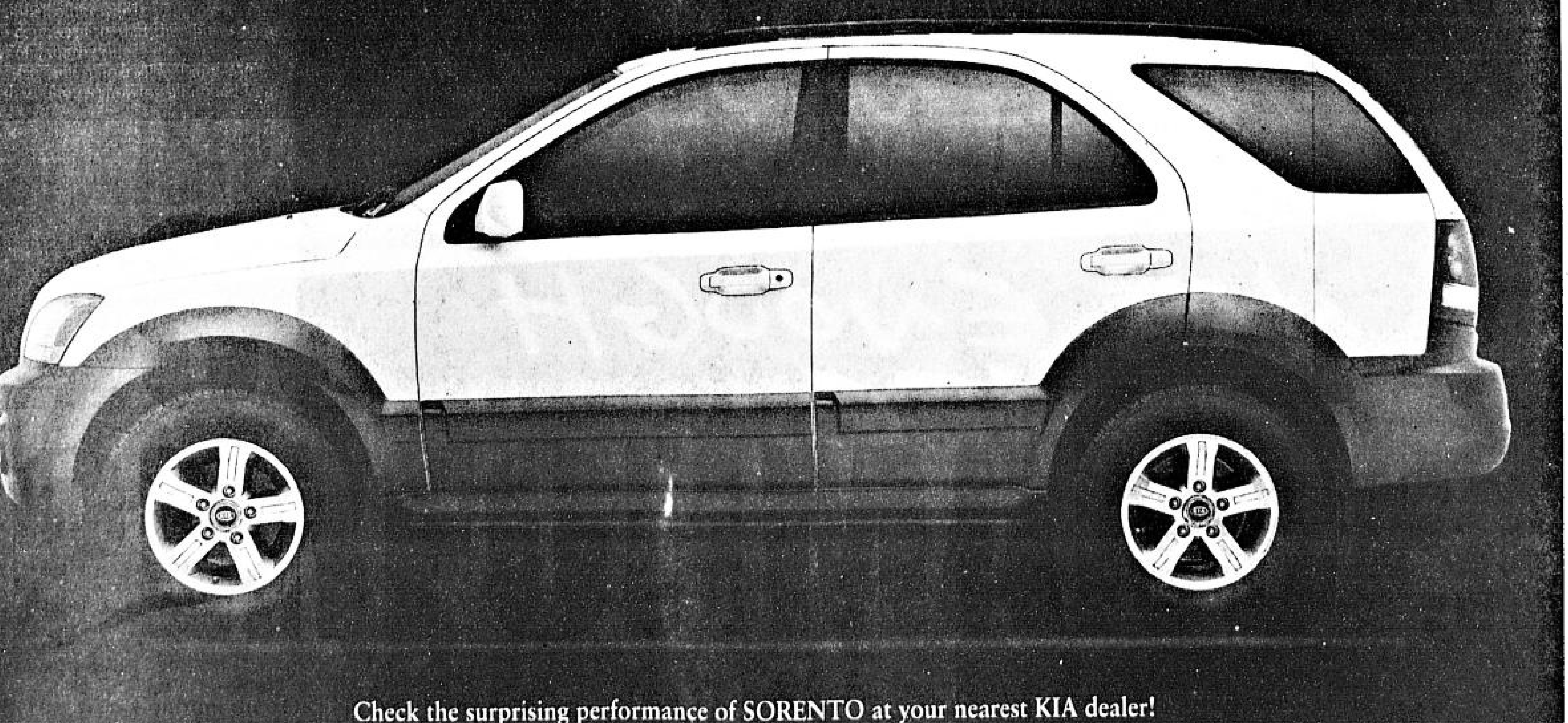

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US braces for worst in Iraq

WASHINGTON—After the deadliest month yet for US troops in Iraq, top officials in President George W. Bush's administration fear the situation will deteriorate in coming weeks as insurgents try to create turmoil amid the June 30 handover of power to Iraqis.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, White House officials said Monday they see reason to be hopeful that the situation will eventually improve. But they can't say when the turning point will come.

From Bush down, the administration now acknowledges that the US-led occupation bred more frustration among Iraqis than the White House had initially expected.

"We're implementing a clear strategy in Iraq. First we will ensure there's an atmosphere of security as Iraqis move toward self-government, Bush told supporters at a campaign rally Monday night just outside Detroit, Michigan.

"We support the effort of local Iraqis to convince the radicals to disarm... America and coalition forces are in place and we are fully prepared to bring security and order in Fallujah and Najaf and around the country of Iraq," he said.

A senior administration official said Monday afternoon that there were developments that could lead to an improvement: The Americans on the ground know more about how to work with local leaders; Iraqis will soon have a measure of political power; they already have defense and interior ministers.

But the official said it is likely that in the next few weeks, those who oppose the American presence will intensify their attacks. In April, 136 American soldiers died in Iraq, and 10 times as many Iraqis—on both counts, the most since Saddam's fall.

Pictures of Americans abusing Iraqi prisoners are damaging to the US cause, the official said.

The administration is hoping that positive images of US soldiers building schools and medical clinics will help counter those photos. The US-funded Arabic Al-Hurra, Al-Iraqiya and the Middle East broadcast network are prime outlets for airing such flattering images, the official said.

The senior official would not rule out the possibility of a request by the administration for more money to finance military operations in Iraq.

Another senior administration official said it is likely that lawmakers will approve money on a contingency basis that could go to the Pentagon for Iraq should it run out of money while Congress is adjourned at the end of this year.

Bush has not been told by military commanders there is a shortfall, both officials said. *AP*

FULL MOON DAY

Buddhist students of a vocational training center attached to a Buddhist temple add final touches to a *pandol* which depicts Buddhist folk tales ahead full moon day in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on Monday. Sri Lankan Buddhists annually celebrate the full moon day on May 4 believed to be the day that Lord Buddha attend enlightenment. AP

Al-Qaida blamed for Saudi shootings

KUWAIT—Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz said on Tuesday he believed al-Qaida was behind Saturday's deadly attack in the Saudi oil city Yanbu.

Asked by reporters at Kuwait airport if he thought Osama bin Laden's militant network was behind the shooting spree that killed five Westerners, Nayef said: "Yes. But we need time to be sure of this matter."

There was no claim of responsibility for Saturday's shootings, which killed two Americans, two Britons and an Australian. The gunmen dragged the corpse of one American through the streets of the Red Sea town.

Two Saudi security personnel were also killed.

The oil-rich kingdom has been hit in the last year by a wave of attacks mounted by Islamic militants, several of them against foreign targets.

"We have been able to foil dozens of attacks which could have been very catastrophic," Nayef said. "We are responsible for protecting every person present in the kingdom."

The Saudi Cabinet on Monday condemned the Yanbu attack and called for more international efforts against terrorism.

"A criminal and deviant band which has sold its soul to the devil is targeting security, stability and Islam," the Cabinet said in a statement after its weekly meeting, chaired by Crown Prince Abdullah.

Swiss-based ABB Lummus, targeted in the attack, said it was evacuating all 90 foreign staff from Yanbu and that an expansion project it was carrying out for a Saudi petrochemical firm would have to be put on hold.

The US Embassy re-issued a warning to around 35,000 American citizens in Saudi Arabia to leave the kingdom.

Prince Nayef was in Kuwait to sign a pact on sharing intelligence with other Gulf Arab states to fight terrorism. *Reuters*

Sharon to amend Gaza pullout plan

JERUSALEM—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon took his first steps on Tuesday toward amending the US-backed Gaza pullout plan that his Likud party rejected, holding consultations with Cabinet ministers on a new blueprint.

Sharon met Justice Minister Yosef Lapid, a senior coalition partner with 15 seats in the 120-member parliament. Lapid kept pressure on Sharon by threatening to take his Shinui party out of the government if the plan was scratched from the agenda.

The prime minister said on Monday he would amend the proposal, which Likud rank-and-file voted down by a 60-40 percent margin in a referendum on Sunday.

Newspapers reported that would mean scaling back the original plan to evacuate all 21 Gaza settlements and four in the West Bank. Instead, the reports said, three Gaza settlements and two in the West Bank would go.

There was no immediate official comment on the reports.

Shimon Peres, head of the main opposition Labor Party, urged Sharon not to water down the plan, predicting the Likud would oppose any ceding of land to the Palestinians.

"They won't let Sharon push through anything serious, even a more limited plan," said Peres, calling for a general election.

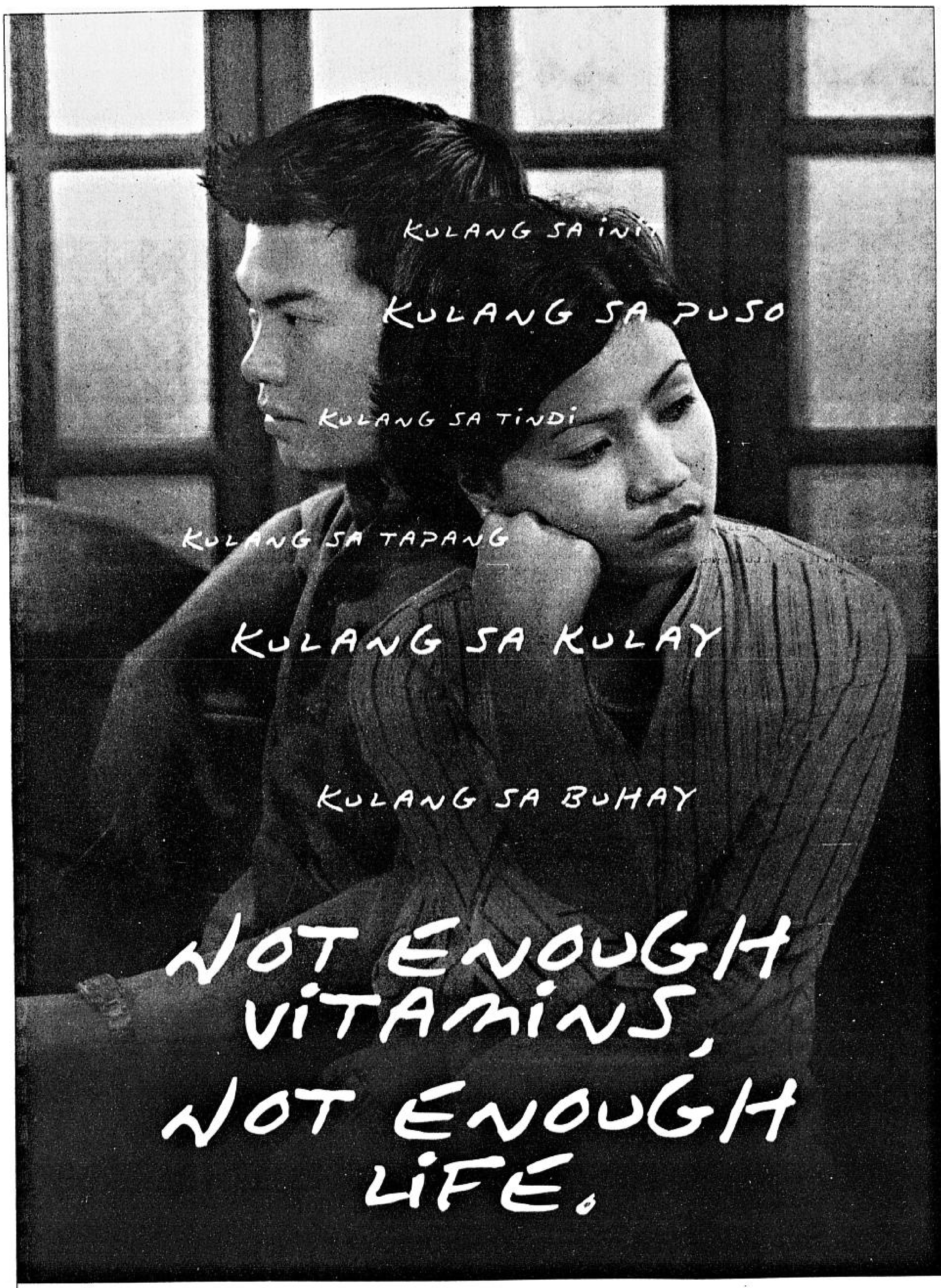
Palestinians say the Gaza plan is a ploy by Israel to retain large swathes of the West Bank and any alternative by Sharon will be more of the same.

"This is a new maneuver to extract more concessions from the Americans and taking this course will mean expanding settlements in Gaza Strip," said Yasser Abed Rabbo, a senior Palestinian official.

US President George W. Bush drew Arab rage when, in backing the plan, he said Israel could not be expected to give up all the land it captured in the 1967 Middle East war.

Sharon, who promised after his referendum defeat to consult with ministers before making any crucial decisions, met Lapid at his ranch in southern Israel. He was also due to hold talks with Likud Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom, a reluctant supporter of the pullout.

"We cannot let the political process disengage because of the referendum. We are not in the government to protect a stalemate," Lapid said on Army Radio. *Reuters*



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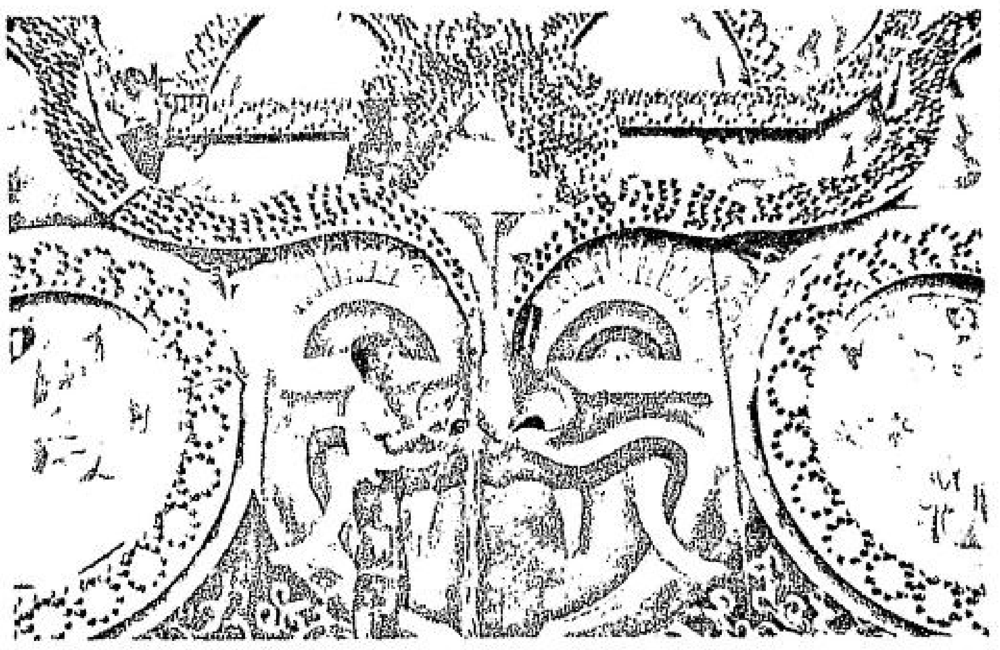

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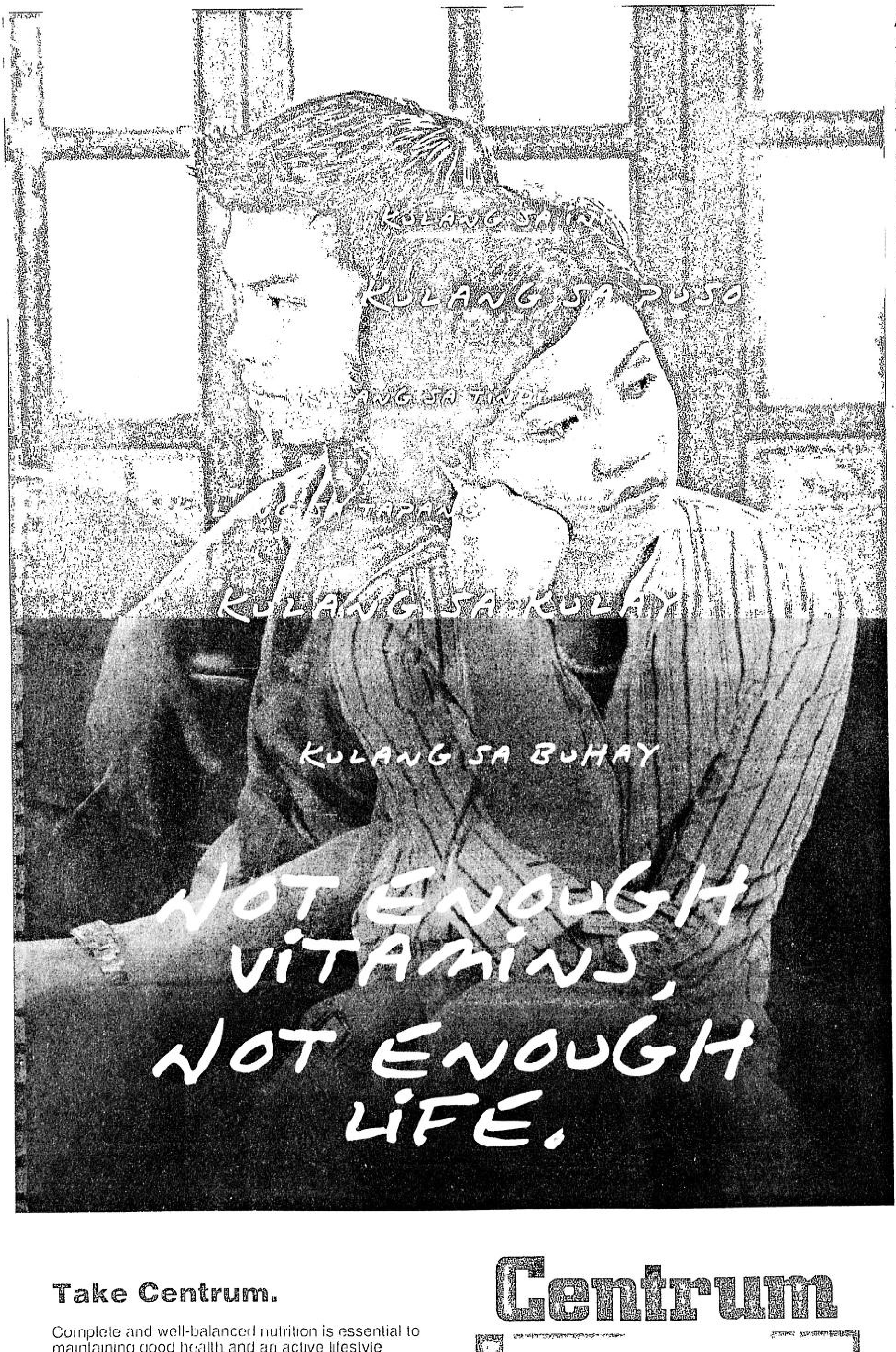

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China confirms three more cases of SARS

BEIJING—Three suspected cases of SARS in the Chinese capital, Beijing, have now been confirmed, taking the number of victims of the latest outbreak to nine, the health ministry said on Tuesday.

All three newly confirmed cases of the highly contagious deadly flu-like SARS were linked to one viral disease laboratory in Beijing, it said on its Web site www.moh.gov.cn.

Only one of the nine has died. Hundreds of people have been isolated for observation in the past few weeks, but hundreds of millions of travelers have been taking planes and trains undeterred for the week-long May Day holiday that ends on May 7.

Nearly 800 people died of the potentially fatal illness worldwide after Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome emerged in southern China in 2002.

Six of the confirmed SARS patients were in stable condition in Beijing's Ditan hospital while a seventh confirmed patient in the capital was expected to be released from hospital after recording a normal temperature for 18 consecutive days, it said.

Another victim from eastern Anhui province was expected to be discharged from a local hospital soon, the ministry said.

No new suspected SARS cases had been reported, it said.

The World Health Organization has said it believes all the current SARS cases are linked to the Chinese National Institute of Virology that has engaged in research involving the SARS coronavirus.

That appears to be part of the reason the Chinese public appears unconcerned.

Mention of SARS has been noticeably lacking in Chinese media in recent days despite temperature checks at airports and railway stations for travelers with a fever, a symptom of SARS.

Unlike last year's outbreak, China is believed to have a system in place to cut the chain of transmission.

However, fears of a SARS comeback have rippled through Hong Kong.

A tourism official there warned this week that the recent return of SARS to mainland China could slow a recent recovery in visitor levels to the city. *Reuters*

Computer worm wreaks havoc on PCs worldwide

HELSINKI/SAN FRANCISCO—A fast-spreading computer worm called "Sasser" hit personal computers around the world Monday, causing infected systems to reboot without warning and disrupting banking and other business in one of the biggest virus-like attacks on the Internet since last summer.

The worm, which first struck over the weekend and is already on its fourth variant, exploits a flaw in Microsoft Corp.'s Windows operating system identified in mid-April, computer security experts said.

Unlike previous Internet worms, Sasser enters and infects vulnerable PCs without any action on the part of the user, allowing it to spread quickly, they said.

By Monday afternoon, computer security companies were also warning of a new twist on the virus: an email, claiming to be from an antivirus company with an attachment purporting to fix Sasser infections, that was actually a new form of the widespread, email-clogging Netsky virus.

Investment bank Goldman Sachs said its Asian and US trading operations were back "at close to normal" by afternoon Monday after the worm disrupted some of its systems by forcing computers to automatically reboot.

Lucas van Praag, a Goldman Sachs spokesperson, declined to elaborate on the extent of the disruptions.

In Australia, Westpac Bank said it was hit by the worm, and branches had to use pen and paper to allow them to keep trading, The Australian newspaper reported.

US carrier Delta Air Lines also suffered a computer glitch on Saturday that caused delays and cancelations of some flights in its system. The company's computer systems were back to normal Monday but the cause of the weekend problem is still being investigated, said Peggy Estes, a company spokesperson. *Reuters*

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Vol. 19 No. 147
Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net
OPINION
THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
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•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 /
528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

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EDITORIALS

Cause

AS the country hunkers down for the real battle—the counting of votes—the counters are widely feared to be a big problem. It is safe to say that the Commission on Elections today is approaching the disrepute in which the Comelec under the Marcos years was held. And that's saying a lot. The administration, for one, frittered away the chance to appoint new commissioners with integrity and ability. The Comelec itself has been saddled with a reactive, and not proactive, leadership. Confusion has been its defining characteristic, instead of efficiency and courage.

Together with the combined effects of long, drawn-out cases concerning computerization, the Comelec today gives the public cause to wonder if the polls won't result in chaos tomorrow. It is this widespread lack of faith in the Comelec and its commissioners that threatens to turn the counting into a time of trouble.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos has consistently pleaded for understanding, patience and cooperation from the public. He forgets that these things come from being respected. Respect is earned, not blindly given. What has he or his fellow commissioners done to earn that respect? Very little, if any.

However, he has a point in warning that dire prophecies have a tendency to be self-fulfilling, if only because it makes people reluctant to invest their time and energy in helping the system work. In which case, we should make a final appeal, to the Comelec and the public, to prove the naysayers wrong and upset the doom-and-gloom predictions. The elections can still turn out, if not so good, then not so bad. But to salvage the situation requires leadership.

Abalos must step up to the plate. He must discard his instincts to talk too much. He must, for once in his life, give the firm impression that he will put his duties above the fleeting pleasures of a nice round of golf.

In the coming days, the demands of the public (never mind the politicians) for reassuring answers, will reach a crescendo. They will be asking: Where is the indelible ink? Where are the ballots? Have too many ballots been printed? Where are the lists, and why are the dead still on them, while too many of the living are missing? Where are the pens, pencils, scotch tape and pad paper for the teachers? Where are their allowances, and who will secure polling precincts? What of the counting? Who will secure the area when power blackouts occur? How quickly can the country expect to have election results tabulated after they start trickling in?

So many questions, so little time. Can Abalos answer them?

Effect

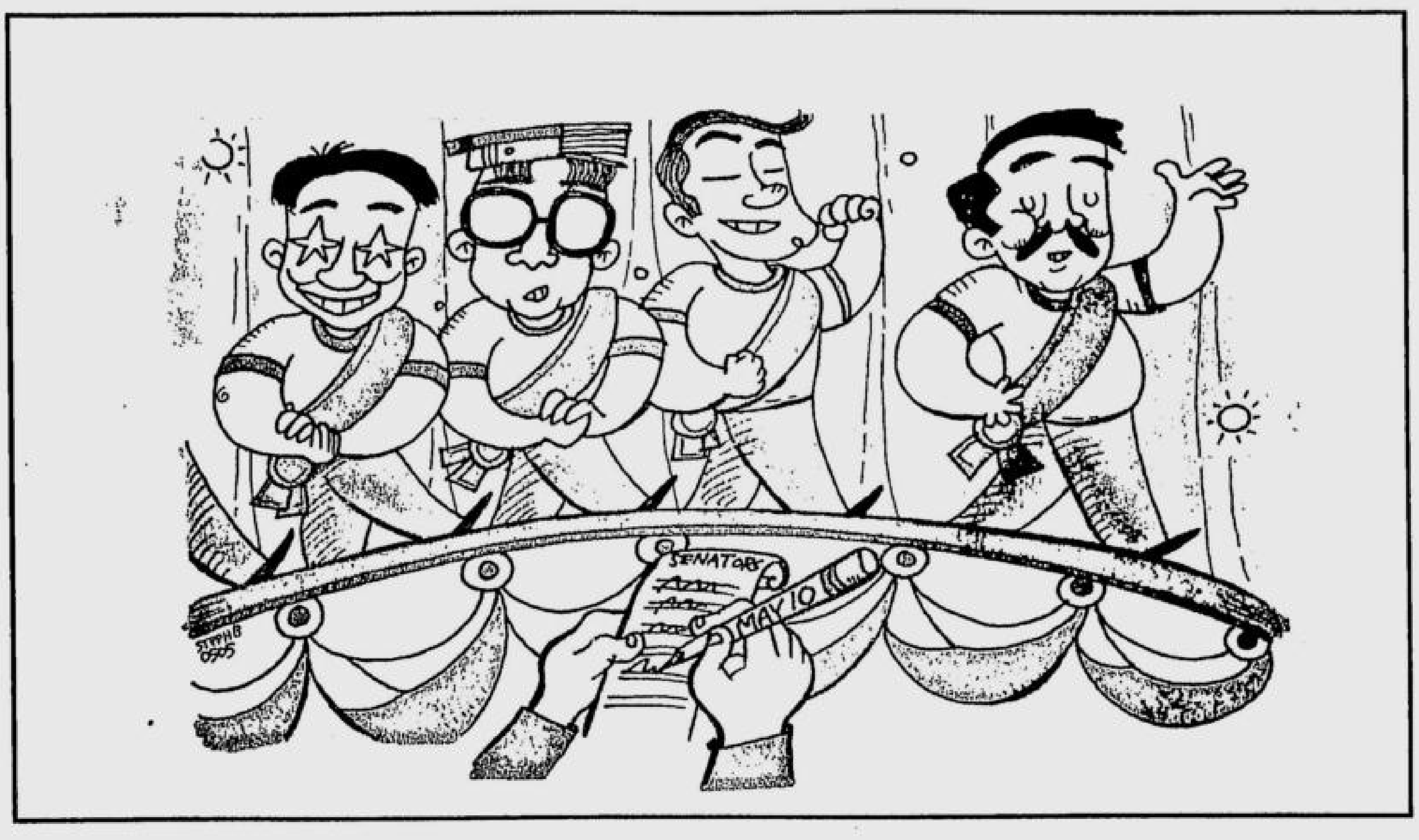
IF the Comelec confounds its critics and manages a fairly smooth election and counting, the benefits to the country are incalculable. There will be, of course, personal vindication—or, to be precise, absolution for Abalos and the Comelec. If the polls turn out to be fairly orderly, and are proven not to be as susceptible to monkey business as widely supposed, it will be a feather in the cap for the country. Most of all, for the electorate at large, to see that their votes are being guarded, and properly counted, will be to know that the results are incontrovertible.

A basic rule in any democracy is that the will of the majority must be obeyed. At the very least, any plurality that results in a victory proclamation must be seen to have been reached plausibly, with a minimum of fraud.

Beyond the reputation of the Comelec, the stability of the country is at stake. As it is, the murmuring about extralegal means being used to protest the results of the elections is rising to a dull roar. The only way the dangers of adventurism can be headed off is if a sizable majority of the public, on all sides of the fence, can believe the results are credible.

It is almost a cliché to speak of "historic moments," but such a moment is approaching. For a country clinging to its democratic aspirations, but tired of so many political upheavals, the coming six years must be stable ones. It is the only way the country can have the breathing room it needs to concentrate on the work of development, instead of perpetually trembling at the thought of class warfare ready to erupt.

Our politicians should resist the temptation to rouse the rabble. Our armed forces and police should enforce order without favoring any side. And once again, we ask the Comelec to do its duty. The country cannot afford a discredited national election at this—or any other—time.



Fearless forecasts at Kapihan sa Manila

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THIS is a surprise: It will be a dead heat for President Macapagal-Arroyo and Sen. Ping Lacson in the presidential election next Monday, with Fernando Poe Jr. third, Bro. Eddie Villanueva fourth, and Raul Roco the tailender. In the vice-presidential race, however, Loren Legarda will beat Sen. Noli de Castro by a big margin, with Hermie Aquino and FPJ tying for third place. There were votes for FPJ as vice- presidential candidate, perhaps anticipating that he would slide down to the No. 2 slot in case of unification between his and Lacson's camps.

That is the fearless forecast of journalists—at least those who regularly attend the weekly Kapihan sa Manila forum. Because the forum last Monday was the last Kapihan before the elections a week later, we decided to hold a straw poll for the presidential, vice-presidential and senatorial candidates. The question was: "Who do you think will win?" not "Whom will you vote for?" In other words, regardless of their personal preferences, who do they think will win? To put it another way, the result was not the way they would vote but, based on their estimates and analyses, the way the whole nation would vote. Journalists like to analyze and predict things, let's see how accurate their forecasts are when compared to the actual results of the elections.

Instead of having the usual politicians and public officials as resource persons, we turned the tables on four columnists (Julius Fortuna of Manila Times, Alvin Capino and Danny Mariano of Today, and Jonathan dela Cruz of Malaya) on the hot seat to answer questions from the audience, make their fearless forecasts and explain them. Then we polled the audience and the panelists on their forecasts on the winners.

The results: for president—GMA, 40.5 percent; Lacson, 40.5 percent; FPJ, 10.8 percent; Villanueva, 5.4 percent; Roco, 2.7 percent.

For vice president—Legarda, 63 percent; De Castro, 19.5 percent; Aquino, 8.6 percent; FPJ, 8.6 percent.

For senators, the 12 winners are divided evenly between KNP and K-4. Enrile, KNP, is the topnotcher, with Pimentel, KNP, a close second, and Roxas, K-4, an equally close third.

The others are: 4. Lim, KNP; 5. Santiago, K-4; 6. Revilla, K-4; 7. Maceda, KNP; 8. Gordon, K-4; 9. Cayetano, K-4; 10. Estrada, KNP; 11. Lapid, K-4; and 12. Madrigal, KNP.

Outside the magic circle, independent candidate Heherson Alvarez made a surprise showing by finishing 13th, with Tatad, KNP; Barbers, K-4; Yasay of the Alyansa ng Pagasa, and Escudero, KNP, with identical votes for the next four slots. Anson-Roa and Rasul tied for 18th and 19th places, and Dilangalen ended up in the 20th place. The last three are all in the KNP ticket.

Three of the four panelists (Fortuna, Capino and Mariano) believe GMA will be the winner, but Dela Cruz chose FPJ. They all said, however, that the vice-presidential race will be very close.

The first three said the patronage politics and government resources unashamedly being used by GMA in her campaign give her an advantage. In contrast, FPJ's "no talk, no mistake" campaign style, his lack of a platform of government, his refusal to participate in any debate, and his coalition's lack of campaign funds were what are pulling him down.

They said FPJ made a mistake in being "too gentlemanly," refraining from attacking GMA in his campaign speeches and press statements, while the latter kept attacking his personality, his lack of a college education and experience in government. He should have been on the offensive instead of on the defensive, they said.

But it was the other way around since FPJ declared his candidacy, defending his being a high school dropout, his Filipino citizenship, his lack of a platform, his refusal to debate. Besides, he didn't get a good press because of the lack of soundbites and quotable quotes. FPJ was too cautious—or just didn't have it, the three said.

But Dela Cruz is confident that in spite of everything, FPJ will still prevail.

As for the vice-presidential contest, all four believe that Legarda is gaining on De Castro for the same reason that GMA is gaining on FPJ: the lady is more articulate, appears to have more up there than the gentleman.

Why is Lacson gaining? I personally believe that deep in their hearts, Filipinos want a disciplinarian, one who can quash crime, corruption, drugs, squatting and unruly drivers, one who is "*buo ang loob, walang takot*." Lacson is all that.

I think that had there been no surveys that ranked Lacson way behind FPJ and GMA, he would get more votes and, with the backing of a major party and an efficient organization, can even win. Filipinos have this bandwagon mentality. They want to vote for who is likely to win, in the same way that the Iglesia ni Cristo endorses the candidates who are likely to win. That is why FPJ led in the early surveys; the people flocked to him because he appeared to be the winner.

I think many people were for FPJ because he was the most likely candidate to beat GMA. In other words, they were for FPJ not because they liked him per se but because they didn't like GMA. Now that FPJ is not so sure of winning, they are turning to Lacson.

How about Roco, why is he going down in the surveys? He used to be ahead in the early surveys; now he is being left behind. Why?

I personally think that Roco rapidly lost his following when he chose as his running mate Hermie Aquino, who has nothing except Ninoy's name and big bags under his eyes. When Roco announced his choice, the people began to have doubts. "Roco is not serious," they must have thought. "*Pinaglalaruan lang tayo. Niloloko tayo.*"

Irrelevant

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I DISAGREE: It's not Japan that has the highest rate of suicide, it's the Philippines. The only difference is that the Japanese commit suicide individually, Filipinos do it en masse.

Joker Arroyo's argument is a case in point. He says we should take a chance on GMA and not on FPJ. "Corruption can be contained or blocked and, if need be, a president can be impeached. On the other hand, there is no cure for a bumbling president who doesn't have the intellectual wherewithal for leadership. There is no constitutional remedy for that situation."

FPJ's answer to corruption, which is "*Dadaan sila sa butas ng karayom*," Arroyo says, is nothing more than show-biz hoopla. "What kind of answer is that? This is another—one of FPJ's trademark cinematic exhortations—tiresome and terribly vacuous."

Better GMA. "The people are confronted with the painful task of having to choose between the incumbent President who is hounded by the opposition with charges of abetting corruption and an aspirant who is totally unprepared for the demands and complexities of the presidency."

Now, what kind of logic is that?

Even if the choice were merely between GMA and FPJ, why should the lesser evil be GMA? Why should an intelligent person who has shown only a talent for doing the wrong things be preferable to a "bumbling" person who has shown a talent only for making "cinematic exhortations"? Between an Ernesto Maceda or a Juan Ponce Ernile and a Nora Aunor or a Pilar Pilapil, whom would you choose? Between Marcos and Cory, whom would you choose? Between a proven evil and a hypothetical one, between a present bane and future one, between systematic corruption and a bumbling one, what will you choose?

Arroyo says FPJ's answer to corruption is a tiresome and terribly vacuous cinematic exhortation. That may be so. But what is GMA's answer to it? The choice Arroyo is offering to the voters is not just between one "who is hounded by the opposition with charges of abetting corruption and an aspirant who is totally unprepared for the presidency." It is a choice between one who is committing massive corruption even as we speak and an aspirant who is totally unprepared for the presidency. The charges of corruption hanging over GMA do not have to do only with Jose Pidal, though it is truly abetting corruption that she had Panfilo Lacson's prime witness in the case against her husband abducted from a safe house. The charges of corruption hanging over her have to do with her wholesale use of public funds to campaign. The first still needs to be proven, the second does not.

The second is visible to the naked eye. Everywhere you go, every time you read the newspaper or watch TV, you will see GMA's virtues being extolled in ad after ad paid for by you and me. If that is not electoral campaigning, then nobody knows what is. And if that isn't corruption, then nobody knows what is. Graft is clearly defined in the law books as the use of public money for purposes other than it was intended. Arroyo, a lawyer, may wish to explain to the public how his and my taxes got to be stipulated in the budget as "GMA campaign funds."

FPJ's answer to corruption may be empty show-biz rhetoric, but how call an argument that says a President who feels free to use taxpayers' money to remain President will take very good care of it after she does? What kind of logic is that? Why should a President who is practicing corruption before our very eyes turn into its scourge after she gets a constitutional mandate to rule for six more years? I said it before and I say it again: we do not raise a peep about the squandering of public funds for a campaign, let us forget about stopping corruption altogether. It won't happen. And we won't have anybody else to blame but ourselves. We signed our conforme to it.

Arroyo says there is a constitutional cure for corruption, which is to impeach a president. Well, what has always been wrong with us is not that we are incapable of heroism but that we rise to heights of heroism only after making our condition intolerable. It's the last two minutes syndrome, or the Ginebra syndrome, call it what you will. We play only in the last two minutes when we can play for four quarters, we do something about an iniquity only when it has gotten insurmountable. Why should we wait to impeach a president for corruption? There *is* constitutional remedy for a president who even now is committing that crime. That is simply not to vote for her.

That brings me finally to Arroyo's argument that this country is confronted with the painful task of choosing between an incumbent hounded by corruption and a movie star who is unprepared for the presidency. Why so? Why is the country confronted by that painful task? Why is the country not offered the pleasant choice between on the one hand an incumbent hounded by corruption and a movie star unprepared for the presidency and on the other by a candidate who is honest and eminently qualified to become president? Why is the country confronted with the painful task of choosing between an incumbent who bungled three and a half years of rule and a movie star who may or may not do worse? Why is the country not offered the pleasant choice between them and a candidate who turned one of the worst departments in this country into its best?

No, it is not Japan that has the highest rate of suicide, the Philippines does. Most of our problems we create ourselves, much of our misery we create ourselves. Someone has suggested that Raul Roco has become irrelevant to our choices. Well, maybe that's the reason we are where we are now. Discernment has become irrelevant, decency has become irrelevant, rationality has become irrelevant.

Maybe that's the reason the country itself has become irrelevant.

Jumping on the bandwagon

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE IGLESIA ni Cristo yesterday confirmed that it has thrown its support behind President Macapagal-Arroyo, vice-presidential candidate Noli de Castro, and six senatorial candidates of the administration's K-4 coalition ticket as well as six opposition KNP candidates. The confirmation was anti-climactic, but still it has shaken the electoral landscape with seismic force.

The decision has triggered the last-minute bandwagon effect that was feared by many. It made the President look like the inevitable winner. One of the results of the alliances is that even Sen. Gregorio Honasan, the chief security officer of Fernando Poe Jr., has virtually dumped the actor and aligned his Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc. behind the administration's steamroller. He has committed the group to backing the administration's programs now under way.

Attention is now focused on whether Bro. Mike Velarde's El Shaddai would follow the stampede toward the administration side. But since El Shaddai claims to have a larger mass following than the INC, it is not as solid for purposes of electoral mobilization as the disciplined INC bloc. Since El Shaddai is under the sway of the Roman Catholic Church, it cannot afford to be seen as having been sidelined by the main current pushing the administration campaign. Nearly every group, which thinks it has political consequence, is now scrambling to jump into the apparently winning bandwagon for fear of being swept aside. Those groups that had been hedging before the tide turned decisively in favor of the administration, can now see vultures circling the skies, ready to swoop down on the carcasses of those left on the battlefield.

Desertions and carrion birds are the surest signs that a battle has been won, and it has left casualties from the carnage. Nobody loves a loser. Elections are like battles that go by the grim rule that the winner takes all. No tears are shed for the losers.

The devastation in this decisive phase of this election fight, taking place in less than a week before the election, has silenced the big guns. All that we hear is the the sporadic firing of snipers' rifles. It is too late for the Poe faction of the opposition or that of Sen. Panfilo Lacson to even think of picking up the pieces of failed unity talks to stage a counter-offensive. Even the INC has given up on them. It washed its hands of responsibility of forming a coalesced opposition ticket. There was no chance of reviving the opposition campaign without a unified single presidential candidate.

In the face of looming defeat, opposition stalwarts have been silent and Poe himself is a picture of a leader who has lost control not only of his bedraggled troops but also of his own nerves. As his ranks crumble, he is showing panic as he unleashes his bad temper on reporters covering his campaign and has started to castigate the press which he accuses of having been antagonistic to him and not giving his side adequate exposure. Every politician tries to use the press to gain political mileage, but Poe squandered the opportunity to present his programs and policy by shunning debate.

At this point, Raul Roco and Bro. Eddie Villanueva are on the verge of committing the same fatal tactical mistake that plagued the unity talks of Poe and Lacson. Roco and Villanueva are reported to be considering joining forces, but like Poe and Lacson, they are afflicted by the big-ego problem. Their problem is who will represent their coalition? Neither Roco nor Villanueva is willing to make way for the other.

After his homecoming from the United States, where he received medical treatment, Roco appears to have been invigorated by his leave and has plunged with a vengeance into the campaign to give it the momentum it never had before he left. However, Villanueva is in no mood to make way for Roco, because he believes God is on his side and he has a divine mission to give a moral dimension to Philippine politics. Politics is a secular undertaking, and when politicians with a messianic complex engage in politics, they tend to distort their reading of political reality, causing them to believe that they can become president with nothing more than the passion of a religious zealot.

Much as Roco has tried to explain the state of his health, he has not explained why, in the first place, he had to leave the field in the midst of a battle. He has revealed medical findings about his cancer and has argued that on the basis of these findings, his illness is not the end of his political career, and that he expects to live an active life for another 10 years, citing the examples of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Nelson Mandela, Woodrow Wilson and other leaders who overcame their medical infirmities and continued to lead useful lives. The problem is that Roco is not FDR or Mandela. Their cases have a different context than that of Roco.

Nobody asked Roco, not even his hosts on the TV talk show "Impact," why he had to quit amid the political battle for medical treatment. Was his pain unbearable at the time? Did his ailment pose such a grave threat to his life that local medical services would have been inadequate to give him medical relief?

All the arguments he has made following his return have focused on his ability to cope with a rigorous election campaign. In any case, the political reality is that whether his health can stand up to the test, neither he nor Villanueva, even if they form a common front, can make a difference in the election any longer. Events beyond their control have already decided the outcome of the election.

'Pogi' points

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

A FILIPINO "who looked like a white man" and dared stand up to colonial authorities; a virile, strapping "man of the masses" whose early death sealed his "legend;" a youthful war hero who parlayed his brilliance and his beautiful wife into lasting infamy; a grieving widow stepping into the shoes and legacy of her martyred husband; a workaholic and "Edsa hero;" and a movie star with an uncommon "common touch." These, says multi-awarded screenwriter and film-TV director Jose Javier Reyes, have been the major archetypes of Philippine politics; the images and characters that countless wannabes have sought to duplicate and resurrect in subsequent elections.

In "Papogi: The Imaging of Philippine Presidents," Reyes, as writer and narrator, posits that the "marketing" of presidents—and thus of politicians in general—in this country has been very much like the way movie studios have sold their actors: with flash and dash, yes, but also myth-making and a careful tending of image and storyline.

In this documentary, which airs Friday at 9 p.m. over ABS-CBN, Joey Reyes asserts that the "showbizification" of local politics is not a recent development. In fact, he notes that modern Philippine politics has been marked from the start by the deliberate creation of a public persona, with Manuel Quezon feeding off the popular disgust with colonial rule to create the image of a cocky Filipino daring to stand toe-to-toe with American officials in negotiations for independence.

* * *

PHILIPPINE democracy could be likened to a genetic experiment gone awry. Like a grotesque creature with a chicken's head grafted onto a goat's body, our political system is an odd melding of American-style democratic institutions imposed on an underlying feudal structure. We have the trappings of democracy without the democratic social and economic structure needed to make it work.

Recently, a student at a forum on "Deconstructing FPJ" at UP Diliman asked me what I thought of the "dominance" of the media in elections, when the outcomes are determined by how the messages are "massaged" by both paid and unpaid media.

Well, I said, what alternative did he have in mind? Before the emergence of the media as a player in elections, candidates were determined not by opinion polls—which at least reflect public awareness—but by old men in smoke-filled rooms deciding whom to anoint. I recalled stories that before every local election, party leaders would pay a visit to my grandmother to get her blessing for their candidates, since as a major landowner she could tell her tenants whom to vote for and thus influence the outcome of the elections.

Media may have contributed to the democratization of the election process, and "Papogi" is replete with examples of how a candidate with the right "image" but without the right connections still managed to break through the barriers erected by elite-dominated party politics. But it hasn't been at all a seamless, painless exchange.

* * *

RIGHTLY, "Papogi" has been criticized for its unwillingness to pass judgment on the presidents whose images it analyzes. I would have appreciated, for one, an assessment of whether Quezon's nationalistic stance was matched by real action in the form of legislation and policy that would have protected our patrimony from the depredations of foreigners.

Was Magsaysay able to translate his popularity and populism into genuine social reform? Or was he, as Renato Constantino wrote, too focused on minutiae, squandering his legacy on water wells and photo ops?

I felt disturbed, too, at the way the post-Ninoy assassination scenario was presented as merely a contest between two contrasting images: an aging dictator and his extravagant wife versus the simple and unadorned visage of a woman seeking justice for her husband's death. There was much more going on then than just contrasting marketing concepts. I don't think one can ignore the social upheaval of the times, or the hope it stirred for the creation of a truly new society.

The same flippant tone is used in discussing Erap: the focus on his interactions with poor folk, the description of the impeachment hearing as one big soap opera, his loyalists' untiring, undying belief in his innocence. Why is this so? Why the willed delusion? Alas, no answers are forthcoming from "Papogi."

* * *

BUT if you have one-and-a-half hours free on Friday evening, then you can't find a better way of making use of them than sitting through "Papogi," a production of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, directed by award-winning director Jose "Butch" Perez, with PCIJ's Luz Rimban as executive producer.

The archival footage alone is worth your time and attention. Researched by the Asian Eye Productions (headed by Kara Magsanoc-Alikpala), it brings us back through history, giving us rare glimpses of our presidents. Invaluable, for one, is the scene of Quezon relaxing with his wife and children. Introducing his "crown prince," (the father of consultant and interviewee Manolo Quezon, by the way) MLQ asks the boy what he wants to say "to the children of America." "I send them my love!" the plucky boy pipes up.

The black-and-white photos and footage, bring us back to simpler, more innocent days but also to the realization that politics then were just as cynical, just as messy, just as corrupt and money-driven as they are today.

"Papogi's" final message is that the images and marketing may be manufactured for our delectation but that believing them, or seeing through them, is our, the voters', responsibility. But have we as citizens and consumers matured enough to see through the *pogi* points? That's one question whose answer we'll find out next Monday.

Travel writing

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

FOR its sheer simplicity, and the fact that the cellphone reception is quite uneven and choppy, Romblon now tops my list as a leisure destination. On the 12-hour boat ride from Romblon to Pier 8 in Manila (about the same time it takes to go by plane to the United States), I started to plan the return trip in my head.

Transport to and from the Romblon town center to the San Pedro beach resort is a bit problematic. Tricycles are the basic transport and the half-hour, P200 ride is so bumpy and noisy one should bring a car by ferry from the Batangas pier to Romblon. The car should be loaded with luggage and coolers filled with all the liquor and goodies that complete any vacation.

One of the things I found odd during my trip was that a welcome lunch, courtesy of the provincial government, was held in a small restaurant called Jaks and run by an Englishman. I should not complain about the generous hospitality extended by Mina Mingoa, but when I ordered seafood, I expected a fresh catch from the sea but I was served a good plate of Norwegian salmon and mashed potatoes. This was also fresh—fresh from the freezer. The green peas were also fresh from a can.

How can a place like Romblon be near the sea and yet have a limited supply of fresh fish and shrimp? Perhaps deep-water fish are cornered by trawlers and big firms, leaving the scraps for the small Romblon fishermen? Maybe there is a need to define municipal and provincial boundaries beyond land to ensure supply and fill in local demand? There were so many questions that cropped up during my two-day stay and it now requires a return trip to get the answers.

The Romblon column elicited an unusually large volume of e-mail responses from Romblomanons (many from overseas) who were so happy to read about their province in the INQUIRER. Maybe after history, I could embark on a new career path and do some travel writing.

One of my long dormant projects is a compilation of travel writing by Filipinos. As a historian, I often read travel accounts of the Philippines and the Filipinos written by foreigners who visited the archipelago as early as the 10th century all the way to our times. That's a whole millennium of material, beginning with 10th-century written records by Chinese merchants all the way to the current Lonely Planet guide to the Philippines. A history will unfold through travel accounts.

Discussing Antonio Pigafetta's "First Voyage Around the World" with my undergraduate history classes this summer, we tried to go beyond the text and see how a 16th-century Italian chronicler made sense of the first Visayans he met. We also read about Magellan's "slave," the man who acted as interpreter, the man whose original name is lost to history because he is simply known today as Enrique (or Heinrich, depending on which version or translation of Pigafetta you are using). Some would like to believe that the first to circumnavigate the globe was not the Portuguese Magellan but Enrique, a Filipino. Unfortunately, Enrique did not write his own account of the Magellan expedition.

Who knows, maybe the battle of Mactan was the result of some cultural misunderstanding? An innocent remark or gesture by Magellan that came through as rude and insulting to Lapu-lapu? The story is varied and endless. One is left to wonder how different our view of that world would be if Enrique had left us with his memoirs. Such are the blinders of history.

Filipino historians are left with documents by biased foreigners all the way till the late 19th century when Filipinos left a written record of their lives and times.

My project will be to compile travel accounts of foreign lands by Filipinos. What did they think of London, Paris, Madrid and New York? Filipinos going abroad for the first time bringing their world view to a foreign land and writing down their impressions—that's turning the tables on foreigners.

Perhaps someone can write about the Philippines, integrating history into the narrative. For example, Romblon surnames.

RG Gabuna from Canada e-mailed a correction to my last column about Romblon surnames:

"Romblon is peppered with surnames that commence with the letter 'M'; while Sibuyan (not Tablas) has a surfeit of family names that begin with letter 'R'. On Central Tablas (the biggest island among the group of islands that make up the province) and the Tres Islas (during my trip the people I talked to referred to these islands as 'Tres Marias') facing the island of Mindoro, the letter 'F' is plentiful. While in Southern Tablas, which includes the municipality of Looc, the town of my birth, the letter 'G' is the most abundant.

"According to the oral history passed on to us by our great-grandparents and grandparents, there was a period during the colonial era when the district military governor, to identify the fugitives from the law that melded with the local populace, issued a decree that in each settlement family names must begin with the same letter. In Romblon proper, the letter 'M' was assigned; in Sibuyan Island letter `R` was given, Odiongan and Tres Islas got the letter 'F' and the contiguous town, Looc (Southern Tablas), had the letter 'G'."

Sorry to disillusion people, but the distribution of surnames in the 19th-century Philippines was undertaken to make census and taxation easier. Surnames carry more history than we think.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Religion and politics, faith and governance

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

LAST Monday Bread of Life Ministries, a Christian inter-denominational group, came out with a full-page newspaper ad entitled "Kingdom of a Higher World," warning Christians against confusing political with spiritual convictions. The statement starts out by acknowledging that we all want societal change, but proposes that "the solution to our national woes will not come when Church leaders get into partisan politics but when they build up their congregations spiritually." It reminds us that there are many different views about what the relationship should be between faith-based groups and politics.

Let me quickly explain that "faith-based groups" is the preferred term for religious organizations, the older term "churches" being now considered discriminatory because it seems to refer only to Christian groups. Beyond political correctness though, I like the term because it emphasizes faith as the foundation of a particular group's world view.

In a country like the Philippines, these faith-based groups are very influential political players even if there is a constitutional separation between "church" and state. In the last week or so, we have seen our politicians' mad scramble for endorsement from various groups ranging from the Couples for Christ to the Iglesia ni Cristo (INC).

Bread of Life is clearly wary about political partisanship, its statement specifically citing, as an example, the "JDV debacle" during the last presidential elections, where an attempt was made to transform candidate Jose de Venecia's initials into "Jesus' Declaration of Victory." Bread of Life acknowledges that "members of the church rightly gifted for government positions should get involved in the political arena" but that "ministers who hold offices in the church should not."

It quotes extensively from the Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville, an ardent observer of the early American experiment with democracy. He noted how important religion was for American democracy, but not through partisanship: "In the United States, religion exercises but little influence upon the laws and upon the details of public opinion; but it directs the customs of the community, and by regulating domestic life, it regulates the states."

Bread of Life's view stands in sharp contrast to that of evangelist Eddie Villanueva, who is running for president with the view that one can participate directly in governance and inject spiritual values into politics.

In his youth Villanueva was active in radical politics and I wonder at times if he was exposed to activists who opposed the Marcos dictatorship for reasons of faith. These were the activists who subscribed to liberation theology, believing that the nation's problems were caused by unjust structures and social sin, for example, employers not paying their workers adequate wages. Its activists fanned out to rural areas and urban poor slums to organize Basic Christian Communities and raise people's consciousness about social justice. Some went to the extent of joining the New People's Army as part of their religious commitment.

Liberation theology was actually imported from Latin America, where it had a large following in the 1970s, in settings similar to the Philippines with military dictatorships and widespread poverty. In Nicaragua, there was the famous case of Fernando Cardenal, a Jesuit who joined the Sandinista guerrillas that overthrew the Somoza dictatorship in 1979. Cardenal became education minister after the Sandinistas took over, and launched a dramatic program that reduced illiteracy from 51 percent to 13 percent within a year. The Vatican was not happy with his political involvement and he was expelled from the Jesuit order in 1984. In 1990, he resigned from the Sandinistas to protest corruption, and in 1997 he was readmitted into the Jesuit order.

People do get nervous when religious leaders enter politics and for good reason: throughout history and into the 21st century, we have seen how easily faith is corrupted into zealotry once tainted by political power. What comes to mind are the Islamic theocracies with their grim ayatollahs and religious police, but I wonder what Tocqueville would say if he could see the United States today, the most powerful nation in the country now headed by a man who mixes his religion with politics. Unfortunately, George W. Bush's brand of Christianity is built on intolerance and hatred, of unending cycles of vengeful war.

Some countries, like Mexico, are so wary of the threat of theocracies that after their revolution in 1910, the new government banned religious clergy from assuming public office, a reaction against the tyranny of Catholic priests in the pre-revolutionary period. Our own Jose Rizal wrote frequently against the frailocracies and would probably be dismayed by the continuing attempts of more conservative quarters within the Catholic Church to impose their views on the rest of the country.

Filipino religiosity is all too often exploited by politicians, sometimes with the collaboration of religious leaders. The problem is not just one of confusing political and spiritual convictions but of outright deception, of cloaking one's political ambitions with religious imagery and attempting to present oneself as chosen by God or by religious leaders.

While I respect religious freedom, I do feel uncomfortable about the practice of priests, ministers and other religious leaders running for office or endorsing particular candidates mainly because these activities only reinforce our regressive politics of personalities and patronage.

The reality is that politicians and religious leaders bargain with each other, each to protect their own interests. The INC's practice of bloc-voting, for example, was said to have helped to protect the sect, especially during its early years, from political persecution. During the Marcos dictatorship, whenever Catholic leaders began to get too vocal about human rights, Marcos would hint about taxing Church properties, or legalizing divorce, moves that would send the bishops into hasty retreat and what they called "critical collaboration" with the dictatorship.

No doubt, as Melba Padilla-Maggay of the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture observes in an article titled "Religion in this election," Filipinos hunger for "righteous governance" and so the temptation to mix religion and politics is most appealing. But maybe the problem is not so much of religion and politics being incompatible than the way the two are so easily corrupted by power. Given that reality, instead of endorsing political candidates or running for public office, religious leaders would do better to help their congregations to become more discerning about the affairs of the nation, and of the world, and to reflect on the role of faith in that world.

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Not among 84 million morons

I WOULD like to congratulate Noralyn Mustafa for her fearless April 19 column in Kris-Crossing Mindanao wherein she noted that we are a nation composed of one very smart little cookie and 84 million morons.

But surely, I am not one of the 84 million morons because I do not believe in surveys which can easily be manipulated for money or for "rewards" after elections.

I will still vote according to the qualifications, moral values and track record of a candidate. Many voters I have talked to are of the same bent.

—PROCOPIO S. BELTRAN JR.,
president,
Nagmamalasakit na mga
Manananggol ng mga
Manggagawang Pilipino Inc.,
919-A Vicente Cruz St.,
Sampaloc, Manila

No Marcos money

THIS is in reaction to the news story "Palace cronies head cash-rich government agencies," (PDI, 4/28/04) wherein the Department of Agrarian Reform was unfairly depicted as party to the supposed channeling of the Marcos money allocated for agrarian reform to prop up the presidential bid of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

We wish to stress that the approval of most of the projects mentioned in that article (such as the health program, "Patubig Natin" and "Kalsada Natin") and their implementation started prior to the term of Ms Macapagal. These are regular and continuing projects of the department under the Program Beneficiaries Development component of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, the off-shoots of earlier projects with the same objective of alleviating the plight of our farmer-beneficiaries. Funding for the projects was sourced not from the P38-billion Marcos money but from the department's share in the national budget.

Further, the projects are not necessarily to last from March to June 2004. The period of coverage does not refer to the duration of the projects but to the OIC-secretary's tenure of office. The OIC-secretary only outlined his priorities for the duration of his expected brief stay as OIC and presented the same to his staff during the department's planning and assessment conference in Cavite last March.

We wish to reiterate our earlier pronouncement that the Marcos money remains intact to this day. The department assures the public that it will not allow itself to be a party to efforts which will undermine the welfare of our farmer-beneficiaries. We are appealing to all concerned to put a stop to such allegations.

—JEFFREY M. GALAN,
assistant secretary,
Department of Agrarian Reform,
Elliptical Road, Diliman, QC

Action needed, not promises

"WATER is life." But in Baclaran, Parañaque City, millions of gallons of water are being wasted due to broken pipes but it seems nobody cares.

For the last 60 days, I have been calling Carlo Sarte and Jojo Guinto of Maynilad to report these broken pipes, *pero puro pangako wala namang action* (but all we got were promises without action).

The broken pipes are in the following places:

1. 1701 Fspiritu St., Baclaran, Parañaque City, near the gate of Baclaran Elementary School, in front of Arthur La Forteza's residence.

2. Corner Quirino Avenue and Pinaglabanan Street, Baclaran, in front of the Korean Surplus Store.

—BIENVENIDO S. ATIENZA,
13 Sampaguita St.,
Vergon, Las Piñas City

Seeing the guiding light from foreign shores

CONRADO de Quiros is too quick to pass judgment on those of us who have opted to live in the United States. It isn't all about earning good salaries (albeit working our a— off) and owning that "cottage with the picket fence." It is more about feeling good about ourselves, our talents, and our potential to become—ironic as this may sound—Pinoys who "can feel deeply" for the Philippines.

There are legions of us who discover that we have so much to contribute to society and government only after leaving the Philippines. Only outside the Philippines are we made to feel that we have rights as workers; that we can move up in life not through connections or bribery, but through dint of hard work and doing what's right; that the law is applied to one and all, no matter one's social status; that one can expect a modicum of civility (read: no urinating anywhere) in public; and, above all, that one is not victimized by blatant corruption, large and small. In short, we do not feel let down in our explorations and aspirations.

What sacrifice am I making? I happen to be a *balikbayan* who is currently with an NGO working for the poor and marginalized in Philippine rural communities. It is by doing this kind of work that I have come to realize that a Pinay who feels good about herself, and who is confident about her time-proven skills and capabilities—feelings she has acquired from years of toil in the United States—can do so much to help her less fortunate *kababayans*.

—PERLA LIMBAGA MANAPOL,
6073 Palma St.,
Barangay Poblacion,
Makati City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Frustrating the committed

COMMITMENT is a virtue. But it could be frustrating. It is so in the story of Noli Abinales and his search for environmental justice.

In December 1996, Abinales, as founding president of Buklod-Tao Inc., an NGO in San Mateo, Rizal received from the late Francisco L. Tupas, president of the National Environmental Watchers Society (NEWS) 110 mahogany, bamboo and cashew seedlings of over five feet tall for free, on condition that the seedlings be planted along the banks of Marikina River from Sitio Doña Pepang and Barangay Banaba.

Less than 20 mohagony trees survived near the barangay chapel. But last Jan. 28, Abinales saw one of the 20-feet tall trees cut down. His inquiries led to the one who admitted cutting the tree for use as posts for the wire fence around his piggery.

Abinales brought the case to the sangguniang barangay. The barangay captain, a Mr. Sulit, heard the case and ordered the surrender of the log, already cut into four pieces, to the barangay. Sulit's order was complied with on Feb. 3. Sulit then told Abinales he would report the case to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources office in San Mateo. But Abinales was informed there was no such office in the municipality.

Abinales had done his duty as a citizen. The government should take over. What should the barangay captain of Banaba do? What should the DENR do? It's against the law to cut a tree without a DENR permit. Yes, even by the owner of the lot on which the tree grows. This could be made an example to deter people violating this law—out of ignorance or not.

—EDNA B. TUPAS,
45 Major Dizon cor J. Tuazon Sts.,
Industrial Valley Subdivision,
Marikina City 1802

No retreat, no surrender

SUCCESSIVE events and media stories regarding the opposition's efforts to unite the past few days have made it imperative that I make this declaration.

Months before the actual campaign began, I had consistently stated that I would abide by a fair and credible selection process for the standard-bearer of the opposition in the forthcoming elections. But the leaders of the supposedly "united" opposition have not only denied me due process. They have scorned me and my followers. To them, the only way to unite was for us to surrender to their choice, and accept the "verdict" of manipulated surveys. Their representatives have offered all sorts of blandishments, all kinds of compromises. We have consistently refused. Our honor and self-respect cannot be compromised.

Our fight is not about power or the privileges that come with political power. Caloy Padilla, my lone candidate for senator, and I, as well as the millions of supporters and followers who have kept the faith unflinchingly throughout these difficult days and weeks, have long embarked on a crusade for a truly meaningful change.

Our fight is about effecting real and not cosmetic change in the way the politics of this country is practiced. A politics that will not compromise the people's welfare and the national interest in the altar of expediency or greed. A no-nonsense leadership that will sincerely and with utmost political will seek to extirpate criminality and corruption. And bring back the rule of law to its full meaning, where every man is equal before its eyes. These, we believe, are the conditions without which the flowering of equal opportunity and economic liberation for the poor will never materialize.

Let me therefore state with firm conviction and a determination characteristic of my whole public life: I will never give up this fight.

We shall face all the obstacles, real or imagined, and submit ourselves to the true voice of the sovereign people, no matter what.

Walang atrasan! Walang urungan!

At sa patnubay ng Panginoong Diyos, magsama-sama tayo sa nalalapit at nakatakdang araw ng tagumpay ng sambayanan, laban sa kriminalidad, sa katiwalian, sa kurakot at sa kahirapan (With Divine guidance, let's join hands this coming day of national triumph in the fight against criminality, graft and corruption, and poverty).

Altogether, let us prove everyone else is wrong. This is our last chance to change endless misery into genuine hope.

Isipin natin ang kinabukasan. Kinabukasan nating lahat, para sa ating mga anak at saling-lahi (Let's think of the future—our future, for the sake our children, for the sake of our nation)!

—SEN. PANFILO "PING" LACSON.
presidential candidate

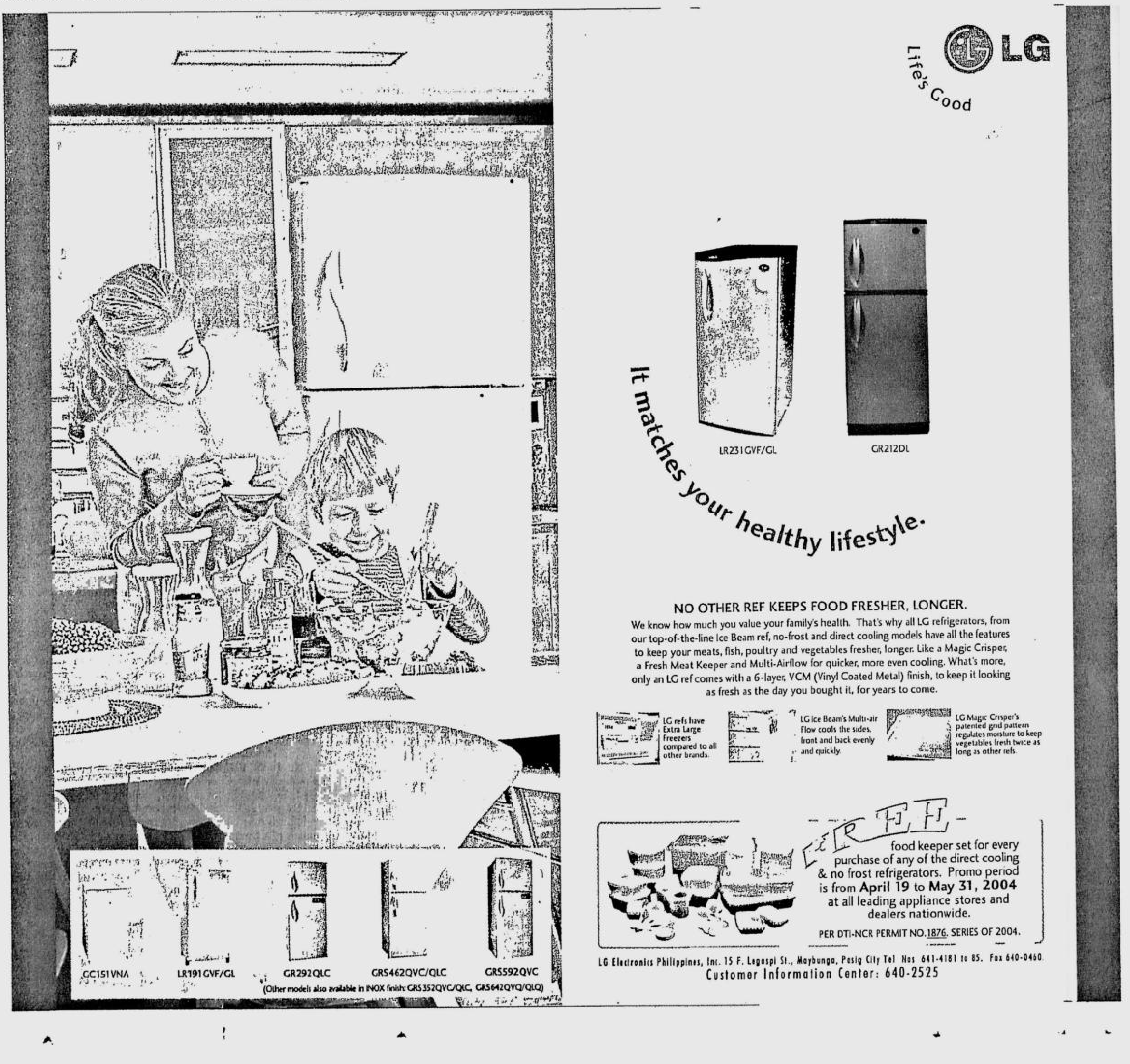
Decreasing water supply due to lack of rain

THIS refers to the INQUIRER's news item on "Busted pipes blamed for poor water supply." (PDI, 4/23/04)

May we clarify that neither the Department of Environment and Natural Resources nor the National Water Resources Board said that the lack of water supply was due to busted pipes belonging to Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Company Inc. The high volume of non-revenue water did not contribute to the decreasing water supply from Angat Dam. The main reason was the lack of rain in the last quarter of 2003 and in January, March and April of 2004.

Angat's average monthly inflow for the last quarter of 2003 was below 50 percent while the inflow for the first quarter of 2004 was 67-33 percent of the 30-year average inflow.

—RAMON B. ALIKPALA,
executive director,
National Water Resources Board,
8/F NIA Bldg., Edsa, Quezon City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6 provinces under Comelec control

By **Joyce Mejillano**, *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*
and **Julie Alipala**, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

SIX PROVINCES have been placed under the Commission on Elections' control following incidents of election-related violence.

Placed under Comelec control are the provinces of Occidental Mindoro, Masbate and Catanduanes in Southern Luzon, and Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi in Western Mindanao.

Also declared under Comelec control are the towns of La Libertad, Dimataling, Dinas and Bayog in Zamboanga del Sur, Buug in Zamboanga Sibugay Province and Sibuco for Zamboanga del Norte.

Under control

The special task forces in the provinces are ready to implement the Comelec decision to place the Southern Luzon provinces under its control.

Chief Supt. Jaime Lasar, Bicol police chief and a member of the regional special task force of the Comelec, said he welcomed the Comelec decision since, in fact, he was the one who requested the placing of Masbate under Comelec control because of the recent spate of election-related violent incidents in the province.

Local officials sought the placing of Catanduanes in Comelec control, Lasar said.

Comelec resolution

He added that although they have not yet received a copy of the Comelec resolution, he has already ordered his provincial directors in Masbate and Catanduanes, who are members of their respective provincial special task forces, to alert their men.

The Comelec regional office here said it also had not yet received a copy of the resolution.

"If needed, we are ready anytime to beef up forces in these areas," Lasar said.

Consistently No. 1

Masbate was consistently No. 1 in terms of election-related violence in Bicol and ranked second in the entire country, based on police records.

Since January, several election-related incidents happened in the province like the ambush on congressional candidate Lina Seachon, which killed three of her supporters, the recent ambush on her brother, gubernatorial candidate Fausto Seachon, which killed a candidate running for councilor in Uson town, the clashes between warring political armed groups, and cases of harassment among local candidates and their supporters.

Private armies

Supt. Romeo Mapalo, Masbate police director, earlier admitted to the INQUIRER that there were indeed armed groups imported from outside Masbate by local politicians to serve as their private armies this election season.

In Catanduanes, at the start of the election period early this year, the incumbent mayor of Gigmoto town, Mayor Armando Guerrero, was harassed by still unidentified culprits while a vice mayor of San Roque town was stabbed by also unidentified person but he survived.

Masbate and Catanduanes have histories of violent elections.

"Once under Comelec control, they are already considered hotspots," lawyer Helen Aguila-Flores, election director for Western Mindanao, said.

Hot spots

"We have now the disposition in the deployment of troops, all I can say now is that we have requested for additional deployment of troops in these mentioned areas," Flores said.

But Flores refused to give details on the number of additional soldiers to be deployed to areas considered hot spots.

She said the areas were placed under Comelec control because of recent election-related violent incidents and because of intense political rivalry.

N. Luzon poll violence escalating as 5 killed

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Six days before the May 10 elections, five supporters of political candidates in Northern Luzon have been killed in what appears to be an escalation of election violence in the region, police said.

In Cagayan, more policemen were sent to Enrile town, one of the election hot spots in the province, after three supporters of mayoral candidate Robert Turingan were killed in Barangay Liwan Sur there on Monday.

Chief Supt. Jefferson Soriano, Cagayan Valley police director, said only two of the fatalities were identified: Roger Bannawagan and Jonathan Agtani, both from Barangay Liwan Norte in Enrile. Their bodies were riddled with bullets from high-powered and short firearms, Soriano said.

He said Bannawagan was a suspect in the killing of a policeman in Kalinga.

Police arrested two suspects. They were identified as Flores Siblawan and Alexander Rivera.

Because of the killings, Soriano asked the Commission on Elections to place Enrile town under its control. He also recommended the placing of Buguey town under Comelec control after two election-related incidents occurred here last month.

In Abra, a supporter of mayoral candidate Florencia Bernos was killed while he was on his way home from a campaign sortie in Barangay Buli there on Monday, police said.

Police said Rey Baldos died while undergoing treatment at the Abra Provincial Hospital for a bullet wound in the chest.

In Pangasinan, a candidate for councilor in Sual town was gunned down by unidentified assassins in front of his house on Monday.

Berting Reynaldo Sr., 52, also barangay captain of Baybay Norte, was a candidate of the Lakas-CMD.

Senior Supt. Mario Sandiego, Pangasinan police director, said he was considering asking the Comelec to place Sual under its control.

Gov. Victor Agbayani condemned the killing and asked the provincial and town police to investigate.

"I call on all sides for sobriety so that the problem will not escalate. Let us not issue inflammatory statements so that the situation will not deteriorate," Agbayani said.

The governor's sister, Viktoria, is running for mayor of Sual.

Supt. Edgar Basbas, deputy provincial police director for operations, said they were verifying reports that politics was behind the killing.

Basbas said three hooded men aboard a white Kia van stopped in front of Reynaldo's house and asked for him. When the victim came out of the house, two men alighted from the van and fired at him. *With reports from Villamor Visaya Jr., Estanislao Caldez, Artha Kira Paredes and Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Zambo Sur gov seeks PNP help on killings

ZAMBOANGA del Sur Gov. Aurora "Auring" Cerilles, who is running for reelection under the Nationalist Peoples Coalition (NPC), has called on Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. to put a stop to the series of killings involving her party's key leaders in the province.

Cerilles in a statement said at least 17 of her supporters have been killed while five, including her husband, former Environment Secretary Antonio Cerilles, survived assassination attempts since January.

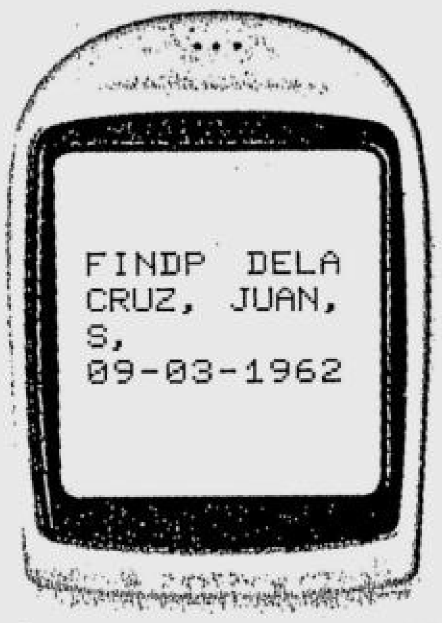
She condemned the killings in the strongest terms and said these could be the work of her political enemies.

But she said the killings would not stop her from her campaign.

Cerilles said she believed the killings were election-related and the perpetrators were receiving protection from influential people.

"I am seeking the help of General Ebdane to put a stop to these killings," Cerilles said.

Ngayon, alamin ang inyong presinto sa text at internet.



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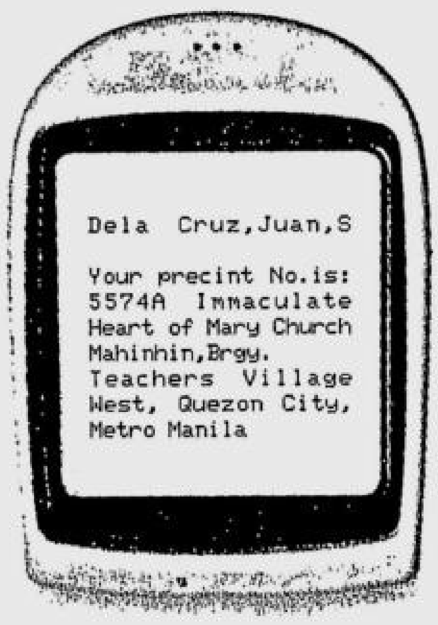

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Itong impormasyon ang makukuha ninyo.

Madali na ninyong makukuha sa text at internet kung saang eksaktong presinto kayo boboto sa May 10, 2004. Bawas hassle sa paghahanap. Bawas kalituhan. Ito'y serbisyong mamamayan ng Comelec para sa mas maayos na halalan.

Sa text, i-type lang ang **FINDP** <space> **Last Name** <comma> **First Name** <comma> **Middle Name o Initial** <comma> **Birth Date (mm-dd-yyyy).**

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6 provinces under Comelec control

By Joyce Mejillano, *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*
and Julie Alipala, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

SIX PROVINCES have been placed under the Commission on Elections' control following incidents of election-related violence.

Placed under Comelec control are the provinces of Occidental Mindoro, Masbate and Catanduanes in Southern Luzon, and Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi in Western Mindanao.

Also declared under Comelec control are the towns of La Libertad, Dimataling, Dinas and Bayog in Zamboanga del Sur, Buug in Zamboanga Sibugay Province and Sibuco for Zamboanga del Norte.

Under control

The special task forces in the provinces are ready to implement the Comelec decision to place the Southern Luzon provinces under its control.

Chief Supt. Jaime Lasar, Bicol police chief and a member of the regional special task force of the Comelec, said he welcomed the Comelec decision since, in fact, he was the one who requested the placing of Masbate under Comelec control because of the recent spate of election-related violent incidents in the province.

Local officials sought the placing of Catanduanes in Comelec control, Lasar said.

Comelec resolution

He added that although they have not yet received a copy of the Comelec resolution, he has already ordered his provincial directors in Masbate and Catanduanes, who are members of their respective provincial special task forces, to alert their men.

The Comelec regional office here said it also had not yet received a copy of the resolution.

"If needed, we are ready anytime to beef up forces in these areas," Lasar said.

Consistently No. 1

Masbate was consistently No. 1 in terms of election-related violence in Bicol and ranked second in the entire country, based on police records.

Since January, several election-related incidents happened in the province like the ambush on congressional candidate Lina Seachon, which killed three of her supporters, the recent ambush on her brother, gubernatorial candidate Fausto Seachon, which killed a candidate running for councilor in Uson town, the clashes between warring political armed groups, and cases of harassment among local candidates and their supporters.

Private armies

Supt. Romeo Mapalo, Masbate police director, earlier admitted to the INQUIRER that there were indeed armed groups imported from outside Masbate by local politicians to serve as their private armies this election season.

In Catanduanes, at the start of the election period early this year, the incumbent mayor of Gigmoto town, Mayor Armando Guerrero, was harassed by still unidentified culprits while a vice mayor of San Roque town was stabbed by also unidentified person but he survived.

Masbate and Catanduanes have histories of violent elections.

"Once under Comelec control, they are already considered hotspots," lawyer Helen Aguila-Flores, election director for Western Mindanao, said.

Hot spots

"We have now the disposition in the deployment of troops, all I can say now is that we have requested for additional deployment of troops in these mentioned areas," Flores said.

But Flores refused to give details on the number of additional soldiers to be deployed to areas considered hot spots.

She said the areas were placed under Comelec control because of recent election-related violent incidents and because of intense political rivalry.

N. Luzon poll violence escalating as 5 killed

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Six days before the May 10 elections, five supporters of political candidates in Northern Luzon have been killed in what appears to be an escalation of election violence in the region, police said.

In Cagayan, more policemen were sent to Enrile town, one of the election hot spots in the province, after three supporters of mayoral candidate Robert Turingan were killed in Barangay Liwan Sur there on Monday.

Chief Supt. Jefferson Soriano, Cagayan Valley police director, said only two of the fatalities were identified: Roger Bannawagan and Jonathan Agtani, both from Barangay Liwan Norte in Enrile. Their bodies were riddled with bullets from high-powered and short firearms, Soriano said.

He said Bannawagan was a suspect in the killing of a policeman in Kalinga.

Police arrested two suspects. They were identified as Flores Siblawan and Alexander Rivera.

Because of the killings, Soriano asked the Commission on Elections to place Enrile town under its control. He also recommended the placing of Buguey town under Comelec control after two election-related incidents occurred here last month.

In Abra, a supporter of mayoral candidate Florencia Bernos was killed while he was on his way home from a campaign sortie in Barangay Buli there on Monday, police said.

Police said Rey Baldos died while undergoing treatment at the Abra Provincial Hospital for a bullet wound in the chest.

In Pangasinan, a candidate for councilor in Sual town was gunned down by unidentified assassins in front of his house on Monday.

Berting Reynaldo Sr., 52, also barangay captain of Baybay Norte, was a candidate of the Lakas-CMD.

Senior Supt. Mario Sandiego, Pangasinan police director, said he was considering asking the Comelec to place Sual under its control.

Gov. Victor Agbayani condemned the killing and asked the provincial and town police to investigate.

"I call on all sides for sobriety so that the problem will not escalate. Let us not issue inflammatory statements so that the situation will not deteriorate," Agbayani said.

The governor's sister, Viktoria, is running for mayor of Sual.

Supt. Edgar Basbas, deputy provincial police director for operations, said they were verifying reports that politics was behind the killing.

Basbas said three hooded men aboard a white Kia van stopped in front of Reynaldo's house and asked for him. When the victim came out of the house, two men alighted from the van and fired at him. *With reports from Villamor Visaya Jr., Estanislao Caldez, Artha Kira Paredes and Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Zambo Sur gov seeks PNP help on killings

ZAMBOANGA del Sur Gov. Aurora "Auring" Cerilles, who is running for reelection under the Nationalist Peoples Coalition (NPC), has called on Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. to put a stop to the series of killings involving her party's key leaders in the province.

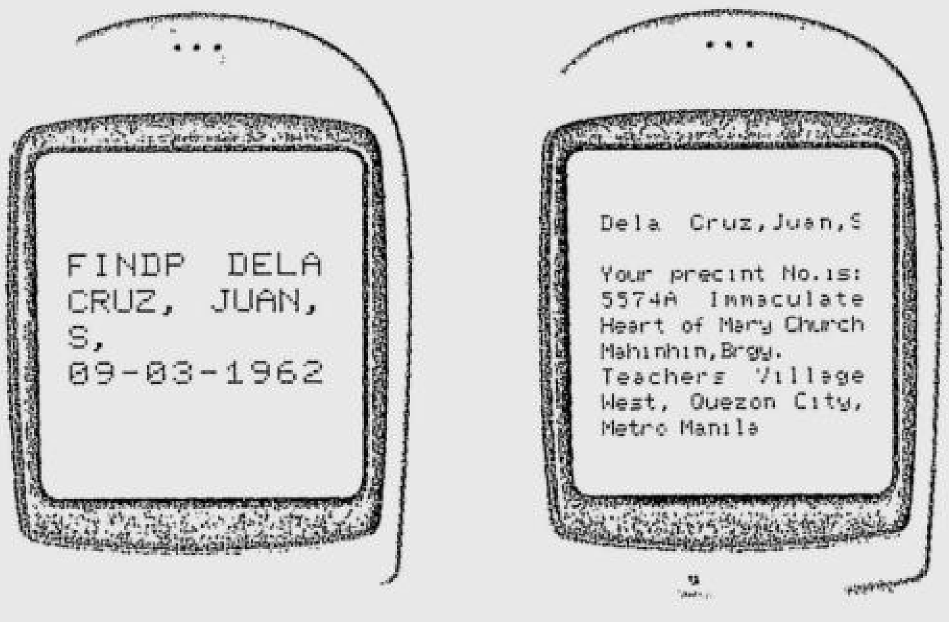
Cerilles in a statement said at least 17 of her supporters have been killed while five, including her husband, former Environment Secretary Antonio Cerilles, survived assassination attempts since January.

She condemned the killings in the strongest terms and said these could be the work of her political enemies.

But she said the killings would not stop her from her campaign.

Cerilles said she believed the killings were election-related and the perpetrators were receiving protection from influential people.

"I am seeking the help of General Ebdane to put a stop to these killings," Cerilles said.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Satur says GMA victory imminent

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—One of fiercest critics of President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration has admitted that the victory of the President in the May 10 elections is imminent.

"The trend shows the predominance of the administration party and the President amid the continued failure of the opposition to field a common presidential candidate," Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo told the INQUIRER.

He said that while the opposition has failed to unite and come up with a viable alternative, the administration has consolidated its support and maximized its machinery and resources to even win over supporters of the opposition.

Ocampo said he also expects Bayan Muna and its allied groups to score "big wins" despite continued widespread attacks from its critics.

He said they expect to get more than the 1.7 million votes they garnered in the 2001 elections, which would ensure them the maximum three seats in Congress.

"After just three years, we have become a legitimate political party that has wide support from farmers, workers, professionals, small businessmen and other sectors," Ocampo said on Monday during Bayan Muna's *miting de avance* at the grounds of the Iloilo provincial capitol.

The rally was joined by around 5,000 supporters of Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Gabriela Women's Party, Anak ng Bayan and Migrante from Iloilo and the island-province of Guimaras. Candidates that were endorsed by the party-list groups also spoke in the rally.

Results of the Pulse Asia survey conducted from March 27 to April 4 showed Bayan Muna got the nod of 22 percent of the respondents, the highest among around 100 party-list groups.

Ocampo said Anak ng Bayan will likely get from two to three seats while Gabriela and Anakpawis will get from one to two seats. Migrante and Suara Bangsamoro could also bag one seat each.

A party-list group needs to get at least two percent of the total votes cast in the party-list elections to get a seat in the House of Representatives.

Ocampo, Bayan Muna's first nominee, said the reach and influence of the groups can also be seen in the number of candidates, including presidential candidates, who have sought their support or endorsement.

"They have failed and they will fail," he said, referring to accusations linking the groups to the armed communist rebellion.

Gov links cops' transfer to politics

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Six days before the May 10 elections, five police commanders were suddenly relieved from their posts in Negros Occidental, an act described by Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Maranon as politically motivated.

The transfer came a week after Senior Supt. Vicente Ponteras was also relieved from his position as Negros Occidental Police Office (NOPO) director.

Relieved from their positions effective May 3 were Senior Insp. William Senoron, 2nd Provincial Mobile Group (PMG) director; Chief Insp. Jerry Bartolome, police chief of Talisay City; Insp. Virgilio de la Cruz, police chief of Moises Padilla town; Chief Insp. Leo Irwin Agpangan, NOPO-intelligence chief; and Senior Insp. Martin Vicente Ogates of the 6th Regional Mobile Group.

Senoron took over as NOPO intelligence chief and Bartolome, as 2nd PMG director.

Agpangan replaced Bartolome in Talisay while Ogates was assigned as police chief of Moises Padilla town. De la Cruz was assigned to the Camp Alfredo Montelibano Sr. in Bacolod City.

Maranon, however, questioned the sudden transfer of the officers, saying it was politically motivated.

"I am not questioning their transfer, that is part of the system, but the motive," Maranon said.

He said there should be no movement, transfer, promotion and new assignments during the election period under the Omnibus Election Code.

The relief of Ponteras and Senoron came after Maranon shifted his support from President Macapagal-Arroyo to top rival actor Fernando Poe Jr.

Supt. Mark Edison Belarma, acting provincial director, said politics had nothing to do with the relief, as it was "normal" and "routine."

BIYAHENG GLORIA
SAMA NA!
PRO-GLORIA

JOINING the bandwagon of Ms Macapagal's campaign are these youngsters waving from a bus that is part of the Biyaheng Gloria caravan which stopped by Angeles City on Sunday night.

JOAN BONDOC/PDI PHOTO

Gloria vows to develop coco industry

LEGAZPI CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday vowed to provide more benefits to coconut farmers even as she claimed that the prices of copra rose 10 times during her administration.

Speaking before a group of farmers and industry leaders in the Aquinas University here, the President said that before her administration came in, the price of copra was only P2.20 per kilogram. She said now it is P22 per kilogram.

"It's not only twice, not thrice but ten times," she said amid the applause of her audience.

A check with the Philippine Coconut Authority office in Legazpi City disclosed that the current prices of copra are P23 per kg for farm gate and P25.30 per kg for mill gate.

The President also claimed that she and her running mate, vice presidential aspirant Noli de Castro, also grew in coconut-producing provinces.

De Castro, who was with her in the visit to Bicol, said it was his family's income from copra that sent him to school.

Ms Macapagal said her administration plans to develop more products from coconuts to further help the industry and benefit the coconut farmers.

In Polangui, she vowed to pour more funds into the completion of the Pantao Port in Libon, Albay, which serves as a vital link of the Bicol region with Metro Manila and the Visayas islands through various sea routes.

Gil Francis Arevalo and Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Policemen, soldiers vote

LEGAZPI CITY—Soldiers and policemen assigned to different areas in the Bicol region were allowed to vote ahead of the May 10 elections on April 30 and May 1. Senior Supt. Benjamin Suratos, Bicol police spokesperson, said absentee voting was set exclusively for the uniformed personnel who could no longer go home to their provinces to vote on May 10. However, he clarified that only those candidates for national positions could be voted upon. The absentee voting was conducted under the supervision of Comelec personnel from Metro Manila. ***Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Gun ban violations

BANGUED, Abra—Police on Friday arrested two aides of a mayoral candidate here for violating the election gun ban. Reports said police recovered a .45 cal. pistol, two M-16 rifles and bullets from Rommel Bersalona and Benny Panugao, security aides of mayoral candidate Dominic Valera, during a campaign activity in Barangay Bangbangar here. The rifles and bullets were found in the jeep of the suspects. Valera, however, said police had planted the guns. Police said they went to Barangay Bangbangar to check on a report relayed by a resident about the presence of armed men in the area.

Artha Kira Paredes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Mayoral bet disqualified

BAGUIO CITY—The name of the Catholic priest convicted by a Baguio court last year for sexual misconduct was removed from the list of candidates for the mayoral post on April 12, a report from the Commission on Elections showed. Fr. Nardo Cayat filed his candidacy for mayor of Buguias, Benguet, on Jan. 5 without disclosing that he was serving a probationary sentence for sexually molesting one of his lay volunteers, according to a Comelec resolution. Buguias Vice Mayor Thomas Palileng, who is running for mayor, filed the complaint for Cayat's removal, saying the priest had committed perjury for not disclosing his conviction. But Julius Torres, election officer for Baguio City and Benguet, earlier ruled that Cayat could be penalized for violating a "moral turpitude" clause in the Local Government Code for seeking an electoral post. ***Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Comelec disqualifies Albay mayoral bet

DARAGA, Albay—A mayoral candidate here has been disqualified by the Commission on Elections First Division on April 26. Daraga mayoral candidate Wilfredo "Boy" Mayor was disqualified for being convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude. But the Comelec Regional Division clarified that Mayor could appeal the decision.

Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Laguna town bet's forum

PANGIL, Laguna—The National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) Pangil, Laguna chapter on Sunday held a candidates' forum and signing of a peace covenant at the Our Lady's Nativity Parish Plaza: Jerome Takoree, Namfrel-PPCRV Pangil coordinator, said he invited all candidates for mayor, vice mayor and councilor to present their programs of government.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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MA PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP. In photo are (L-R) FAIth EVP and School Director Samuel Yap, FAIth President Saturnino Belen Jr., PNU President Dr. Nilo Rosas and Vice President for Academics Dr. Estefania De Guzman. Looking on are FAIth Chair for Bachelor of Secondary Education Lourdes Lozano and PNU officers Dr. Epifania Tabbada and Dr. Norma Manaloto.

Philippine Normal University (PNU) and First Asia Institute of Technology and Humanities (FAIth) recently forged an agreement for the holding of a Master of Arts in Education Program at the FAIth campus in Tanauan, Batangas. Aside from the Diploma in Master of Arts that will be granted by PNU, the program also includes a certificate course in e-Learning competency that will be granted by First Asia Institute.

As of 2001, there are only 13, 719 master's degree holders in the Philippines. 152 teachers in Calabarzon have master's degrees which is equivalent to barely 1.1% of the total figure. Only a small percentage of these Master's degree holders have a strong background on information technology.

Classes for the first batch of graduate students for academic year 2004-2005 will start on July 3, 2004. Teachers in the Calabarzon region who wish to earn their M.A. degrees are encouraged to enroll. There are scholarship grants and other incentives available for this program.

World's Fastest Reader Joins FAI^th

The World's Fastest Reader Dr. Ma Teresa Calderon recently joined First Asia Institute of Technology and Humanities (FAIth). She will be holding the position of Dean of the College of Humanities starting School Year 2004-2005.

Dr. Calderon also acts as First Asia Institute's consultant for education, focusing on reading and "Super Learning" skills development. She is presently supervising the testing and training of FAIth's faculty to develop the teachers' skills in order to be more effective in the classroom

Dr. Calderon was acclaimed as the "World's Fastest Reader" in July 1969 because of her feat in reading 50,000 words per minute with 100% comprehension at Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois, USA. In subsequent tests given by the University of Minnesota, University of Illinois, Purdue University and Northwestern University, she improved her reading speed to 80,000 words per minute with 100% comprehension. She is featured in the Encyclopedia Britannica (Vol. 19, 1971), journals and various publications for her reading feat.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP
SEARCH COMPLETED

First Asia Institute of Technology and Humanities (FAIth) selected 184 full scholars in its recently concluded search for College scholars for academic year 2004-2005. A total of 2,423 graduating High School students from 136 public and private schools in the Calabarzon area participated in the examinations.

The College Scholarship Program, now on its second year, is one of the major projects of FAIth to contribute to the upgrading of educational standards in Calabarzon.

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ANO PO ANG KATOTOHANAN?
NOLI "KABAYAN" DE CASTRO

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REJECT THE POLITICS OF ENTERTAINMENT!

Our nation is at the crossroads of history and the choices we make on election day will make or break the democracy that generations of our countrymen have shed blood, sweat, and tears to bring forth.

There is no doubt that our democracy is facing its greatest crisis. It is not only a crisis of leadership but a crisis of relevance. As each day pass, hundreds of our countrymen are voting with their feet, emigrating to distant lands not only in search of greener pastures but also in protest of the hopelessness in the land of their birth. They have lost hope that our brand of democracy can still save them from the quagmire of poverty and the morass of helplessness that have characterized our daily lives.

Thus, the May 10 elections is a test for all Filipinos rich or poor, young or old, urban or provincial. The results of these elections will determine whether we will become the laughingstock of the world or become the saviors of the motherland. More than just selecting who will lead us, the results of this election will determine where we are going and how we will get there.

Thus, we should support the candidate who has the vision, the experience, and the ability to move this nation forward. The president for the next six-years must be ready to assume not only the role of Chief Executive, but also that of being Commander in Chief, Top Diplomat, Political Statesman, Chief Economist, International Salesperson, Moral Leader, and most importantly, Mother of the Nation.

All of these responsibilities require the candidate with the necessary qualification, temperament, and work ethic not found in ordinary people. Unfortunately, several candidates have managed to reduce this election to a plethora of sound-bites and entertainment numbers that betray the hollowness of their vision and platform of government. With nothing but popularity as a qualification, these candidates and their followers have managed to enchant some of our countrymen to misguidedly place their hopes for deliverance on ill-equipped celebrities and folk heroes.

We in the Liberal Party rejects the politics of entertainment and pure popularity that offer no concrete program of government. As a party, we are rallying behind one of our own, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, our honorary chairman, and daughter of President Diosdado Macapagal, himself a former LP president.

We are confident that among the presidential aspirants, only GMA has the vision, direction, experience, education, and the will to address the most complex problems of the country that has accumulated over the past 30 years. Only she can inspire and unite our people to make the necessary sacrifices we must take together in the coming years to make our country great again.

In the last stretch of the campaign, the Liberal Party of the Philippines stands solidly behind GMA and the K-4 coalition in the forthcoming elections. We will work with them to return the politics of entertainment to the theatre and restore Philippine politics to one of experience, competence, and continuity.

"Noon at ngayon, Liberal marangal"

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46 mayoral bets are unopposed

By Gobleth Moulic
Baguio City

WHILE most candidates are striving hard to court voters, 46 mayoral candidates in Northern and Central Luzon are assured of victory in the May 10 elections as they are running unopposed.

Nine of them are political neophytes, although most of them are close relatives of their predecessors. The rest are incumbent officials who are seeking another term.

Those belonging to prominent political families are virtual winners. They are Speaker Jose de Venecia and Rep. Mark Cojuangco in Pangasinan; Rep. Imee Marcos and Gov. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. in Ilocos Norte; and Rep. Gilberto Teodoro Jr. and Rep. Jesli Lapuz in Tarlac.

The Ilocos region has 20 unopposed mayoral candidates; Cordillera, 14; Cagayan Valley, seven; and Central Luzon, five.

Abra has the most number of unopposed mayors at 11. They are Rudolfo Bernardez IV (Bucay), Albert Guzman (Dolores), Cesario Barona (Lacub), Felix Castillo (Langiden), Mario Baawa (Malibcong), Masayo Domasing (Manabo), Rolando Somera (Pilar), Garde Cardenas (Sallapadan), Amador Diaz (San Quintin), Wilma Gattud (Tubo) and Jose Lagen Jr. (Villaviciosa).

Unopposed candidates in the Cordillera: Allen Jesse Mangaoang (Balbalan, Kalinga), Rogelio Leon (Kapangan, Benguet) and Concepcion Balao (Atok, Benguet).

In Pangasinan, which has 44 towns, 10 mayoral candidates are running unopposed. In the four cities, only Urdaneta will have an unopposed candidate.

Except for Sto. Tomas, the other candidates running unopposed in Pangasinan are incumbents. They are Leocadio de Vera Jr. (Bayambang), Ramon Guico Jr. (Binalonan), Angelita Jimenez (Dasol), Jose Ferdinand Calimlim Jr. (Mapandan), Romulo Antolin (San Quintin), Jose Ginez (Sta. Maria), Dionisio Lagmay (Sison), Alain Rabang (Umingan) and Nonato Abrenica (Villasis).

In La Union, mayoral candidates assured of victory are Jessie Panta (Burgos), George Pinzon (Luna), Reynaldo Flores (Naguilian), Arturo Valdriz (San Juan) and Floresto Sayangda (Santol).

Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte and Cagayan have two unopposed mayors each. In Ilocos Sur, they are Samson Bangaoil (Alilem) and Fernando Quiton Sr. (Sugpon). In Ilocos Norte, they are Jesus Nalupta Sr. (Batac) and Joseph de Lara (Solsona). In Cagayan, they are Aline Alfonso (Abulug) and Alvaro Antonio (Alcala).

In Isabela, unopposed are Edgar Guyud (San Guillermo), Antonio Talaue (Sto. Tomas), Arnold Bautista (Tumauini) and Natividad Bernardo (Palanan).

Other unopposed mayoral candidates: May Calaunan (Diffun, Quirino), Nuepe Manuel (Ambaguio, Nueva Vizcaya), Eduardo Basilio Joson (Quezon, Nueva Ecija), Dennis Pineda (Lubao, Pampanga), Mariano Tangson (San Luis, Aurora), Ambrosio Cruz Jr. (Guiguinto, Bulacan) and Jessu Edora (Masinloc, Zambales).

No automatic proclamation

By Delmar Carino
Baguio City

UNOPPOSED reelectionist Mayor Rogelio Leon of Kapangan, Benguet, has asked the Commission on Elections if unopposed candidates could already be proclaimed as winners even without waiting for the May 10 elections.

Leon's query could be shared by 26 other unopposed candidates seeking different posts in the Cordillera.

On April 20, the Comelec said election laws prohibit the automatic proclamation of unopposed political aspirants.

"An unopposed candidate must still be voted upon even if he is running alone," said Armando Velasco, Comelec regional director. "He should garner at least one vote to be proclaimed as duly elected since there is no such thing as an automatic winner."

The rule is true for all unopposed candidates nationwide, he said. He urged these candidates "to rally their supporters to go and vote for them to achieve a clear public mandate."

Ricardo Lampac, Comelec regional counsel, said unopposed candidates should themselves vote, otherwise, they might suffer the fate of a barangay chair in Mindanao who did not have any opponent in the July 15, 2002 barangay elections.

The candidate, Lampac said, did not bother to vote because "he thought he would be proclaimed anyway as the winner for running unopposed."

"What happened was no one in that small barrio went to vote for him, hence, there was no basis to proclaim him as the winner for not having been legally voted upon," he said.

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PATENT PENDING

FPJ's campaign: Royal passage stuck in real world

From page A1

This kind of talk, and the behavior that flows from it, leaves a distinct impression: the Poe campaign operates in a world different from the one the elections will be conducted in. Other critical issues are dealt with in the same unreal way: opposition unity, the crowds as a projection of the vote, the unexpected lack of funds, crossed signals and multiple factions, organizational shortcomings. They are all dismissed, or blithely answered.

Makati Mayor Jojo Binay, for instance, coyly refuses to make a distinction between Poe as candidate and Poe as celebrity. "*Yung lahat ng pumupunta sa* rally, *yung lahat ng (bumabati) sa* motorcade ... *boto lahat ni* FPJ *'yan, at ni* Loren (Everyone who goes to the rallies, everyone who greets the motorcades ... those are all votes for FPJ and Loren)," he says in a press briefing in Makati City.

Accessible in Nasugbu

On April 22, the day before the results of the latest Social Weather Stations survey came out, Poe and his Senate slate barnstorm through Batangas. He had absented himself from the previous day's sortie in Mindoro; in Nasugbu, he tells reporters what he had suffered from. "*Parang* (something like) chest cold," he says.

Lunch is served at the White Cove resort, a few minutes' drive from the town plaza. The resort is an enormous development. The main building is imposing, the villas nearest the beach impressive, but other facilities remain unfinished. The general impression is that the place has, perhaps temporarily, run short of funds.

About an hour before Poe arrives, the lobby begins to fill with campaign staff, first from local candidates and then from the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino Senate slate. The senatorial candidates or their proxies reach the resort by helicopter; Fred Lim, Johnny Enrile, Boots Anson-Roa, Kit Tatad, Sonny Escudero, Amina Rasul loiter in the patio, posing for pictures with members of the local campaign staff.

Lim and a surprisingly sprightly Enrile are the favorites of the cell phone-and-camera crowd. (Belying his 80 years, Enrile joins a table peopled by reporters and a few fellow candidates by deftly lifting a chair from the next table, whipping it around, and then, like a schoolboy, sitting on it with the backrest in front.)

Poe's chopper is the last to land. He is accompanied, among many other people, by fellow movie star Philip Salvador, an occasional guest of his on the campaign trail. (The redoubtable Eddie Garcia, who unlike Poe has in fact played the role of a president, albeit only on TV, appears in all the rallies. He comes on stage after FPJ.)

The cell phone-and-camera crowd follows the presidential candidate as he makes his way to a private area for lunch. But Sotto and the media coordinators—"shepherd" in the reporters' shorthand—pass the word: Poe will meet the media after lunch.

At about 2 p.m., Poe makes good on his word, descending to the part of the patio where the reporters had taken their lunch. Many people accompany him, including Legarda, Sotto and some of the *hawi* (crowd-parting) boys. A little later, making his first appearance on the campaign trail as overall campaign manager, Binay shows up behind FPJ.

All told, the give and take lasts about 20 minutes; in that time, Legarda, who sits at Poe's left, is asked only one question. The rest of the questions, about a dozen in all, are directed at Poe. Later, in the new library of the Leviste compound in Lipa City, Legarda teases the reporters sharing her table about not asking her more questions in the Nasugbu press conference. The trouble, she says, laughing, is that "I'm always accessible."

Access to Poe, on the other hand, is a commodity worth its weight in journalistic gold. According to the reporters who cover Poe regularly, his Nasugbu briefing was only the third sitdown, and only the second formal news conference since the three-month campaign period started on Feb. 10. It happened 72 days into the campaign.

In the press conference, Poe is in good form. He cracks jokes about failing to communicate, via cell phone, with opposition rival presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson: "*Pareho na kaming* low-batt! (We are both running low on battery power)." He comments on the campaign money reportedly flowing into Lacson's camp: "*Baka gusto niya akong bigyan ng pangarera* (Maybe he'd like to give me some to bet on the horses)." He slaps down ex-President Fidel Ramos' suggestion, aired the day before, that he give way to Lacson to promote opposition unity. It is the opposite of deposed President Joseph Estrada's advice, that Lacson give way instead. "I'd rather take the suggestion of President Erap," Poe says, flashing a winning smile. Amidst general laughter, Sotto remarks: "Okay *'yan, a.*"

Uncoordinated on Lipa

In the same press conference, he is asked about reports that Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos, an old friend of his from the movies, had denied his campaign permission to hold a grand rally in the city plaza.

"*A, hindi ba sa* plaza (You mean it's not at the plaza)?" is his first reply.

This is unfortunate, because right before his press conference, Charito Apacible, his candidate for Batangas governor and the KNP's provincial chair, had given one herself, to the same reporters, in the same place. In her briefing, which started at about 1:40 p.m., Apacible accused administration Sen. Ralph Recto, Santos' husband, of scuttling their rally at the plaza. She even quoted what she said were Recto's threats.

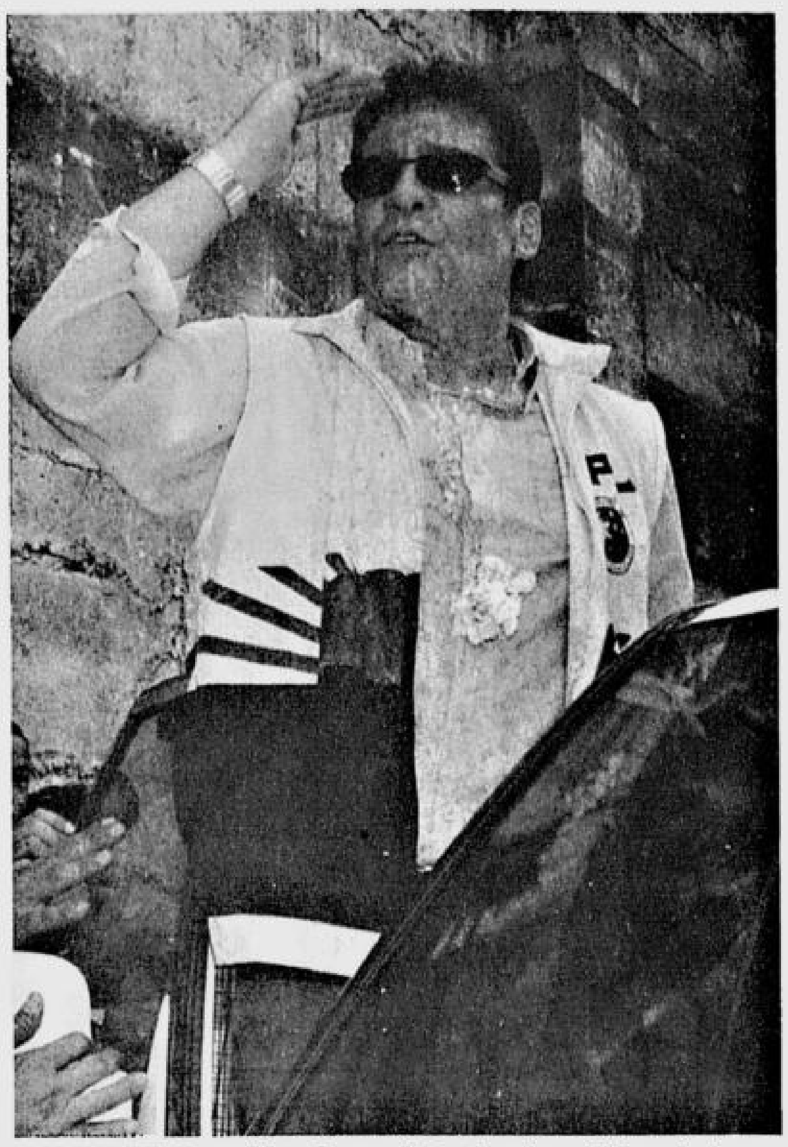
In his press conference, all Poe could say to the inevitable follow-up question was that he believed the pressure of politics must have forced Mayor Vi's hand.

It would have been a simple matter to give Poe a head's up on Apacible's claim. Because (apparently) no one did, Poe found himself in an awkward situation: asking the media where the Lipa rally would be, and the media relaying to him the same information his own candidate for governor had broadcast less than half an hour ago.

But campaign insiders say everyone is deferential to Da King; the failure to tell him could have been an unintended consequence of the way his world is ordered.

As it turns out, Apacible got it all wrong (or as Recto told reporters later in the evening, she made it all up).

At about 11 p.m. a van of reporters, uninvited and unannounced, enters the Recto residence in Lipa. An ABS-CBN OB van is already inside. The mayor and the senator are on the verandah, wearing house clothes, with a stack of photocopied documents and a tray of biscuits on the table. They say they are monitoring the rally in Lipa (where, it was reported to the dismay of the diminutive Mayor Vi, Poe senatorial candidate Ernie Maceda had called on the people in her own city to drive out of office both the "*pandak*" [dwarf] of Malacañang and the "*pandak*" of Lipa).



PRESIDENTIAL candidate Fernando Poe Jr. salutes his fans during campaign sortie in Catbalogan, Samar. EDWIN BACASMAS

Santos says the KNP campaign's first verbal request to use the plaza was immediately approved, but it was for a day earlier, April 21. When the local organizers realized their mistake and filed a new request received on April 19, it was too late, because the plaza had been booked for April 22 many weeks before. (Hence the documents beside the biscuits.)

"*Ganito lang ito* (That's all there is to it), magnified, exaggerated, because of the elections," Santos says. She thinks the world of "Ronnie" (Poe's nickname, which she pronounces "Rannie"), she says, and she always will. "I can attest" to his integrity and capacity, she adds. "Ronnie Poe is one person I truly respect."

But asked whether she thinks her good friend would make a good president, she says: "Being a public official is no joke ... it won't be very easy for him. He will have a hard time."

The reporters leave the house with a cell phone-based tip from Recto: the SWS survey which will be released tomorrow shows Ms Macapagal widening her lead over Poe, 35.3 to 30.8.

Triumphant in Batangas

After an exhausting town-by-town motorcade through Batangas (by Legarda's account nothing less than triumphant, by other accounts fit for a king), the campaign caps off the day with simultaneous rallies.

The rally in Lipa is held on an open field owned by the Leviste family. From the campaign stage, it looks as if the rally had attracted several thousand people—more than the plaza could have comfortably accommodated. Because the field is at the corner of the highway and a major road, and dozens of campaign vehicles had parked on the streets, a huge traffic jam all but blocks passage for a couple of hours. Hundreds of vehicles—cars, buses, and many, many trucks—are stuck; drivers and passengers pass the time stretching their legs or smoking cigarettes or pacing up and down the highway.

Because of a parallel rally in Batangas City, the KNP ticket had split itself into two, with one group campaigning in one city earlier in the evening and then traveling to the other later at night. It is literally midnight when Poe makes his appearance on the Lipa stage.

The presence of many show business personalities—Niño Muhlach and Rez Cortez among them—allows Apacible to wax expansive. At one point, she playfully gives thanks to everyone on stage: "*Sa lahat ng narito, ang aking mga kapwa-artista* (to everyone here on stage, my fellow actors)."

And then it's time. Winding up a short intro, she calls on "the next president of the Philippines," and Poe bounces on stage (the *hawi* boys do their job well). It is four minutes past midnight.

Poe launches into his stump speech, a concatenation of titles and famous lines from his movies. By design, the speech does not dwell on specifics. Hours before the rally started, for instance, the influential Archbishop Oscar Cruz accused the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. of illegally using some P68 million to support President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign. It is a damaging charge, a potential liability for the President herself, but there is no mention of it in Poe's speech.

The crowd applauds at each of the familiar lines.

At 12:10, Poe wraps up his speech, and then—the clincher in every FPJ rally—calls on his "surprise" guest, Eddie Garcia, popularly known as Manoy. Garcia, like Enrile a member of the fit-as-a-fiddle octogenarian club, delivers an impassioned speech attacking the Macapagal administration. (Usually, he talks about the country's growing debt; this time is no exception.)

Poe then picks up the microphone again, discharging yet another movie-inspired broadside at Garcia.

"*Inagawan na naman ako ng eksena ni* Manoy," he says. "*Dapat hindi ko na pinasikatan ng araw 'yan* (I shouldn't have allowed this scene stealer to live another day)."

Another roar from the crowd.

Then it's hand-raising time, and Poe and Loren pose for pictures with their local candidates. But from the stage, it is easy to see that the crowd has thinned at the edges. People have started going home. The rally finally ends at around 20 past 12.

Respectful in Naga

On April 23, the KNP campaign hits Bicolandia. It has been 10 days since Bicol's favorite son, ex-Sen. Raul Roco, left unexpectedly for the United States for medical reasons. But one wouldn't know it from the campaign signs.

From the airport in Pili on to Naga City, streamers in strategic places declare: "*An lugar na ini* 100% Roco (this place is 100-percent Roco)."

Poe continues his version of a whistle-stop campaign, using the motorcade to great effect. But the question of conversion—how many of those who come out to see Da King will actually vote for him—still hangs in the air. In the Camarines provinces, Poe is the same reclusive action star who has come a-visiting; people come out to see him.

But Roco's looming presence (something like four-fifths of Bicolano voters supported Roco in 1998) leads to one of the few grace notes in this campaign.

At the evening rally held on a closed-off portion of Peñafrancia Avenue, Poe makes sure to wish Roco well.

Without mentioning his rival's name, Poe says he hopes the ex-senator ("*ang ating kaibigan,*" or our friend) gets well soon. An appreciative murmur ripples through the crowd.

The view is radically different from the middle of the audience (estimated size: several hundreds).

Those who are 25 feet away or farther from the stage have an impeded view: buntings of the well-heeled candidates (Legarda, Jinggoy Estrada and Jamby Madrigal) and another favorite son (Kit Tatad, who also hails from Bicol) hang low over the crowd, resulting in an effect well-known to photographers.

From a distance, the stage looks curiously cropped. .

Tatad holds fort; he is followed by Rasul, who says she is a close friend of the city's popular reelectionist mayor, Ramon Magsaysay awardee Jesse Robredo.

In turn, she is followed by Boots Anson Roa, Jinggoy Estrada, Sonny Escudero and then Legarda. But it is Estrada who captures the fancy of the crowd. (Just arriving on stage and looking for his seat, he manages to create a stir.)

His stump speech, drawing parallels between himself and his detained father, is easily the best of the candidates'. It is easy to follow, it is self-deprecatory, and it contains just enough of the truth to come across as believable. From the middle of the crowd, the reaction is at first amused, and then gleeful. When Estrada reaches his second-to-the-last comparison, about his father supposedly saying to him, "*Noong nagpakulong ako, nagpakulong ka rin* (When I allowed myself to be jailed, you did too)," the crowd erupts in a collective laugh. The reaction is almost giddy.

In truth, this joke is the highlight of the evening rally. Poe's reception about half an hour after Estrada's star turn is enthusiastic, but it doesn't scale the heights of that jailhouse crack.

It is only around half past 10 when Poe is introduced, by Sotto, and from the middle of the crowd he is visibly still full of energy (unlike the tired candidate who spoke at the Lipa rally the night before). His delivery is stronger, and he even deigns to accept Legarda's "challenge," to sing a duet with her. It is, of course, "Kahit Konting Pagtingin," the theme from one of his hit movies.

Pumped-up in Pandacan

Poe is even more pumped-up in his April 26 sortie in Pandacan (in the sixth district of Manila, where Malacañang is). He had just met with Lacson, his main rival for the opposition vote, and he looks relaxed but alert.

The closed-off part of Avelino Street is packed; the crowd overruns the one-lane road, filling a portion that stretches about a kilometer. Aside from Garcia, show biz stars Richard Gomez and Annabelle Rama show up on stage.

Legarda, when she gets off her van, is also treated like show business royalty. But tonight the focus is indisputably on Da King.

At about 10:30 p.m., he alights from the Land Cruiser, without his glasses on. In the middle of a crowd that screams his name and looks set to collapse on him, he calmly takes out his eyeglasses as he walks and puts them on. Unlike in Lipa, he is not hustled on to the stage.

His stump speech lasts longer than usual. Eddie Garcia adds to his own too, listing President Macapagal-Arroyo's three titles ("*tatlong titulo*") as "*artista. economista at utangista* (pretender, economist, and debtor extraordinaire)."

Interviewed on stage, in full view of the crowd, Poe is at ease fielding several questions. He confirms meeting with Lacson "somewhere in Quezon City," and then blithely answers the perennial unity question: "Right now we are one ... in protecting the ballot."

Lost in survey world

Earlier backstage, Sotto tries to pass on what he calls a "tip" from his "intel" or intelligence sources. "*Lulutuin nila ang* exit poll (they will cook the exit poll results)," he tells the three reporters who made it to the Pandacan rally. He is referring, apparently, to a supposed conspiracy involving SWS, the ABS-CBN network, and Malacañang. "*Mabigat 'yan. Pinag-aaralan pa namin kung anong* counter-measures (this is serious, and we are studying which counter-measures to use)."

And then the clincher: "*Itong mga* survey, *walang-hiyaan na* (these surveys are shamelessly being manipulated)."

He declines to make the formal announcement, however, and suggests that Legarda will do it. But the running mate also declines to turn tip into news.

In a more measured manner, Herrera says much the same thing over lunch after Binay's press conference in Makati. "There is that perception that the surveys are not accurate. Whether they are manipulated or not" is another matter.

He points to three "factors" why surveys are inaccurate: the selection of respondents, respondents saying things "just to please you," and the surveys' own margin of error.

Disclosing that he has spoken with a Poe campaign strategist in Cabanatuan City, Herrera says he shared the strategist's conclusion that "the most Gloria can get is 32, while for FPJ it's 45. Those are the numbers."

He then adds: "The biggest factor that influences is what happens in the field."

The Pandacan rally is proof of Poe's drawing power. But is it necessarily proof of his vote-getting pull?

After Poe has left the place and the stage is clear, a fan of his approaches the reporters, who are beside a van calling in their stories. She asks: "*Wala na ba kayong* souvenir (don't you have any more souvenirs)?"

Reporters walk out on FPJ in Dagupan

From page A1

reporters the runaround following yet another argument with one of them on Monday.

But first they sent Poe a letter expressing their disappointment and denouncing his earlier statement that the media were not reporting the truth about his campaign.

"We also protest the propensity of some KNP officials to discriminate against some members of the media, particularly those who come up with negative but factual reports," the letter said.

According to reporters who tried to arrange an interview with the actor yesterday, Poe's personal campaign manager Sen. Vicente Sotto III said yes, but only if GMA 7 reporter Sandra Aguinaldo were excluded.

Aguinaldo had irked both Poe and Sotto for reporting that the actor was pelted with fruit during a motorcade in Cavite last week.

Before this, Poe suddenly refused to speak to reporters, saying his latest interviews had not seen print, anyway—and this only 24 hours after breaking a previous two-day "silence."

Hide and seek

Reporters set out before 7 a.m. yesterday to try to interview the actor at his Dagupan City hotel, only to learn he had left for a motorcade in Alcala town.

In two separate batches, the reporters motored to Alcala, one hour away, still hoping to get a word from Poe before the start of a motorcade around Pangasinan.

The first group caught the actor just before he climbed onto the back of the truck for the motorcade. But he was in no mood to talk.

"I waited for you (at the Dagupan hotel) but you were not there," he told the reporters. "Time out *muna*."

Even so, a reporter asked for his reaction to the report that movie actress Nora Aunor had been paid with public funds to campaign for President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"*Kahit ano pang sabihin ko, hindi naman lumalabas*(Whatever I say, it will not come out)," Poe quipped.

The reporters were surprised. Poe had obliged them the day before with interviews between rallies in Anda, Alaminos and Mangatarem, all in Pangasinan.

Immediately before this, Poe had shunned the media for two days after the first reports came out that the influential Iglesia ni Cristo sect had endorsed the candidacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

During his interview with reporters in Alaminos on Monday, Poe confronted Aguinaldo about the fruit-pelting report and denied that any such incident had happened.

"Cool *ka lang* (Keep your cool)," ousted President Joseph Estrada advised the actor, his close friend of 40 years, after Monday's incident.

Estrada said Poe was really a good man but that the pressures of the campaign might have gotten to him.

Asked if he had imparted this advice to Poe before, Estrada, who called up the INQUIRER yesterday afternoon, retorted: "How can I when I am in jail?"

Estrada is detained at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, while undergoing trial on graft and plunder charges before the Sandiganbayan.

Estrada himself was known to be impatient with critical members of the press when he was President, going as far as instigating an ad boycott of the INQUIRER, which had displeased him.

Like Poe, Estrada stopped an INQUIRER reporter from covering his press conferences.

Int'l group warns RP courting AIDS epidemic

From page A1

tion rates in Asia. Over the past 20 years, the Department of Health has recorded just 2,009 HIV infections, of which 645 cases developed into full-blown AIDS.

But Human Rights Watch said the government's refusal to pay for condom distribution meant large numbers of Filipinos were being denied access to one of the best means of preventing AIDS, placing many at risk of infection with the virus.

"The Philippines is courting an AIDS epidemic with its anti-condom approach," said researcher Jonathan Cohen, author of the Human Rights Watch report, "Unprotected: Sex, Condoms, and the Human Right to Health in the Philippines."

"The casualties will be millions of people who cannot protect themselves from HIV infection," Cohen said.

The report noted that some local officials, like Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, prohibit the distribution of condoms in government health facilities. School-based HIV/AIDS educators are often disallowed to discuss condoms, it added.

In 2003, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines blocked legislation that would have authorized the use of national funds for condoms and other contraceptives.

That same year, President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration awarded a P50-million contract to an organization, Couples for Christ, to provide "natural family planning" seminars that discourage condom use, the report said.

It said the Macapagal administration had "stood in the way of aggressive HIV prevention strategies by, among other things, failing to support comprehensive reproductive health legislation that would expand access to condoms."

Cohen said that Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit had assured him the government promoted the use of condoms to stop the spread of the virus among high-risk groups including prostitutes, homosexuals and overseas Filipino workers.

Even so, the report criticized the Philippines for failing to provide complete HIV/AIDS information to sex workers and other groups at high risk of infection. It quoted sex workers as saying they rarely used condoms and sometimes questioned their effectiveness, while others said police used possession of condoms as evidence to prosecute prostitutes.

Cohen said Human Rights Watch interviewed 35 HIV carriers and sex workers in Metro Manila and two other metropolitan areas north of the capital. The team also interviewed health officials, international agencies and non-government groups.

Human Rights Watch urged candidates in the May 10 presidential election to address the urgent need for HIV/AIDS education, including the importance of condoms. "The silence of the candidates to HIV/AIDS is deafening," Cohen said at a news conference.

Archbishop Fernando Capalla, president of the CBCP, refused to comment on the report until he had seen it. But he said the Church's objection to the use of condoms and its preference for married couples' use of natural birth control methods was well known.

He said the Church believed sex workers should be convinced to seek another livelihood, and that promoting condom use among them would not be right.

Roderick Poblete, head of the National Aids Council, said the government subscribed to the World Health Organization's "100 percent condom use" policy. But he also emphasized the importance of sexual abstinence and mutual fidelity.

Poblete said the government's policy was to let couples choose among birth control methods—whether natural or artificial—depending on their cultural or religious beliefs. *Reports from AP and AFP*

GMA, Poe camps trade . . .

From page A1

royo's superstar endorser Nora Aunor P6.2 million in government money, the Palace disclosed that it had a copy of Poe's high school report card from the Mapua Institute of Technology.

But Michael Defensor, Ms Macapagal's campaign spokesperson, said it would be in bad taste to use it against Poe, a high school dropout, in the home stretch of the heated campaign.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday at the Regent Hotel in Naga City, Defensor said a copy of the movie idol's report card was "slipped under the door" of the K-4 office in Makati City as early as three weeks ago.

He said the administration coalition decided to keep the report card to itself because it did not want the campaign to get ugly and deteriorate into mudslinging.

"We want to show them that we are decent people and we have *delicadeza* by opting not to use Poe's report card as a political campaign issue," Defensor said.

Poe's educational background, or lack of it, was one of the main issues raised against him as a presidential candidate.

Here's another punch for the standard-bearer of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino: A talent in one of Poe's TV campaign ads said he would not vote for the actor.

Johnny Barnes, 66, said that while in the ad he was "made to look like a poor farmer" railing against the administration's alleged use of public funds for Ms Macapagal's campaign, it was "*trabaho lang* (just a job)" which he did for the P10,000 fee.

In an interview yesterday, Barnes appeared satisfied both with his performance and with the quick buck he had made.

But he pointed to his temple and said in Filipino: "If I will use this [my brain], I will not vote for FPJ."

Reporters met Barnes at a Quezon City restaurant. He was accompanied by his wife Mila and Vic Felipe, a tabloid columnist and officer of the Kapisanan ng mga Artistang Pilipino sa Pelikula at Telebisyon.

This did mean, however, that Ms Macapagal had a sure vote with Barnes.

Asked whom he would vote for if not Poe, Barnes said he and his wife were "still choosing" between Raul Roco of the Alyansa ng Pag-Asa and Ms Macapagal.

Defensor said he was forced to disclose K-4's possession of Poe's report card after the actor's camp accused the Palace of paying Aunor P6.2 million in public funds in exchange for her endorsement of Ms Macapagal.

Forced disclosure

Poe's camp had showed as proof a photocopy of the check, which Defensor dismissed as a forgery.

Defensor admitted that Aunor had received payment from the government. But he said the amount was only P620,000, and was issued last year as an honorarium for her contribution to the government's social service projects.

Noting that the opposition had also admitted that the alleged check given Aunor had been merely passed on by an informant, Defensor said this was similar to how the K-4 obtained the copy of Poe's card.

"The only difference is they used it and we didn't," he said.

Defensor said the K-4 felt there was no need to retaliate by revealing Poe's high school record, given the President's commanding lead in the surveys.

He also said the K-4 had no plans to file charges against the opposition for supposedly falsifying documents.

Just doing her job

In Dagupan City, Poe said it was the administration, and not Aunor, which should be investigated on the matter of the P6.2-million check.

He said it was just a job for Aunor, but that if it involved government resources, "*kelangan imbestigahan* (an investigation is required)."

Asked if he felt bad that Aunor was campaigning for his rival, Poe said he bore no grudge against his fellow actor.

Poe's allies and friends in show biz shared his sentiment.

"For services rendered, [the payment is OK, but not if it involves government money]," Sen. Vicente Sotto III, Poe's personal campaign manager, told reporters.

He also demanded to know why it was Aunor who was being zeroed in on.

Movie actor Eddie Garcia said Aunor was "just doing her job" and "just being professional."

He said that as far as show biz people supporting Poe were concerned, they were doing it for free and with love (*"gratis et amore"*).

KNP senatorial candidate Francisco Tatad said of Aunor: "I don't believe she is in the position to make a distinction between money coming from the government and money coming from the personal funds of [Ms Macapagal]. The point is, the check is coming from Ms Macapagal or someone representing [her]."

Tatad also vouched for lawyer and KNP secretariat chief Hector Villacorta, who had presented documents concerning Aunor's talent fee.

Saying he had known Villacorta since their days in the Marcos regime, Tatad said he could not imagine the latter "presenting a half-baked document."

Sotto agreed, saying: "He (Villacorta) is not the type to just come out with an allegation. He'd make sure that he's standing on solid ground before he comes out with something."

Admission

In Biñan, Laguna, Sen. Panfilo Lacson criticized Aunor for saying that the P6.2-million check she supposedly received from the Office of the President last March was a forgery and that she had only received P620,000 in September 2003.

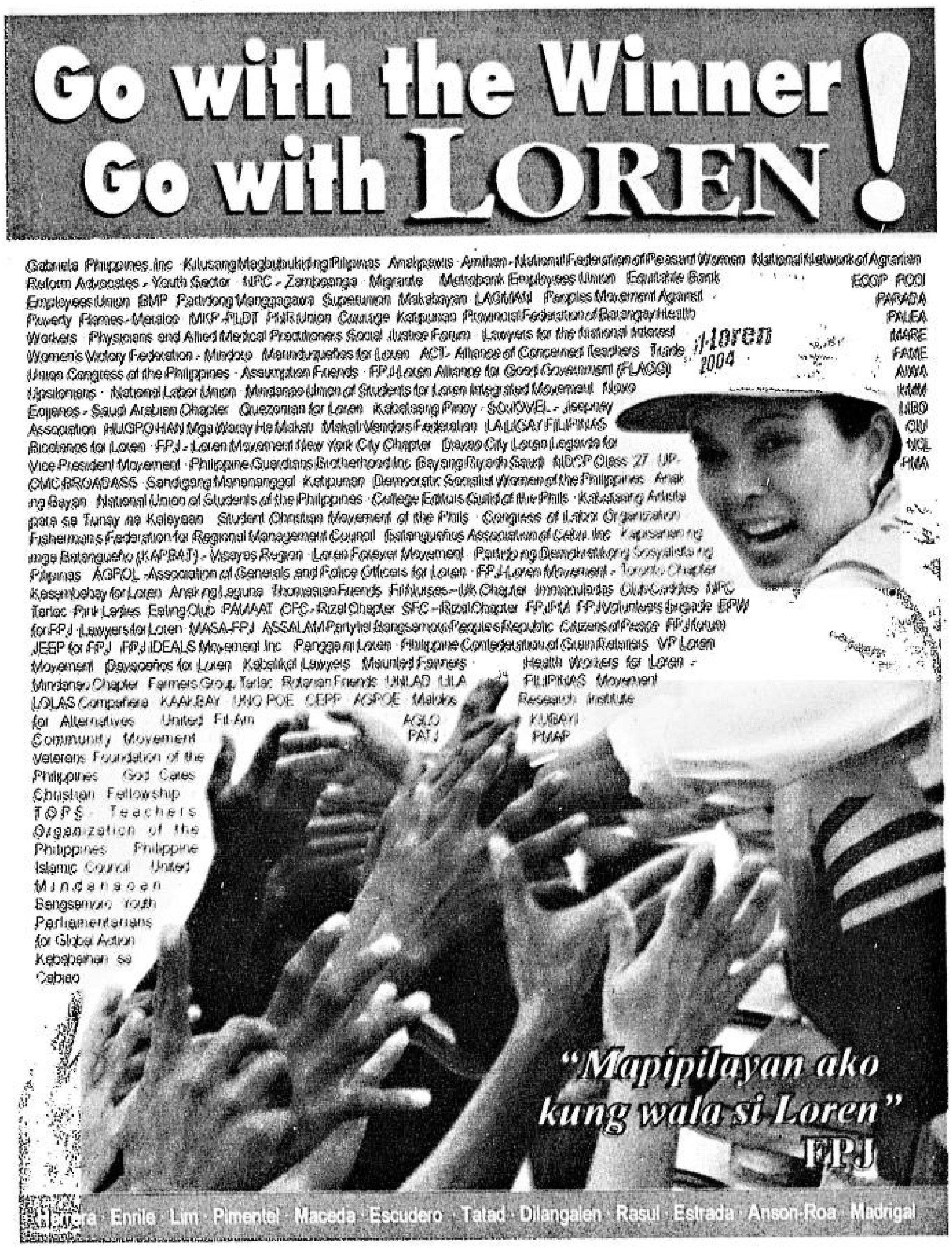
"That's not a defense, that's an admission," the presidential candidate said during a break in his campaign. "It doesn't matter if it's P62, P620, P62,000, P620,000 or P62 million. The fact remains that they were using government funds in the campaign [of Ms Macapagal]. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Norman Bordadora*

Tanong ng Bayan
INQ TV
Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi

Kanino mapupunta ang boto ng kaliwa?

Umuugong ang balita na kay GMA daw. Totoo nga ba? Ang sagot nina Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo at GMA campaign spokesperson Sec. Mike Defensor, at nina Atty. Marichu Lambino ng Public Interest Law Center at INQUIRER columnist Belinda Cunanan. Tunghayan ngayong alas-10 ng gabi, sa ABC. (May replay bukas, alas-8 ng umaga.)

ABC



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Go with LOREN!
Loren 2004
"Mapipilayan ako kung wala si Loren" FPJ
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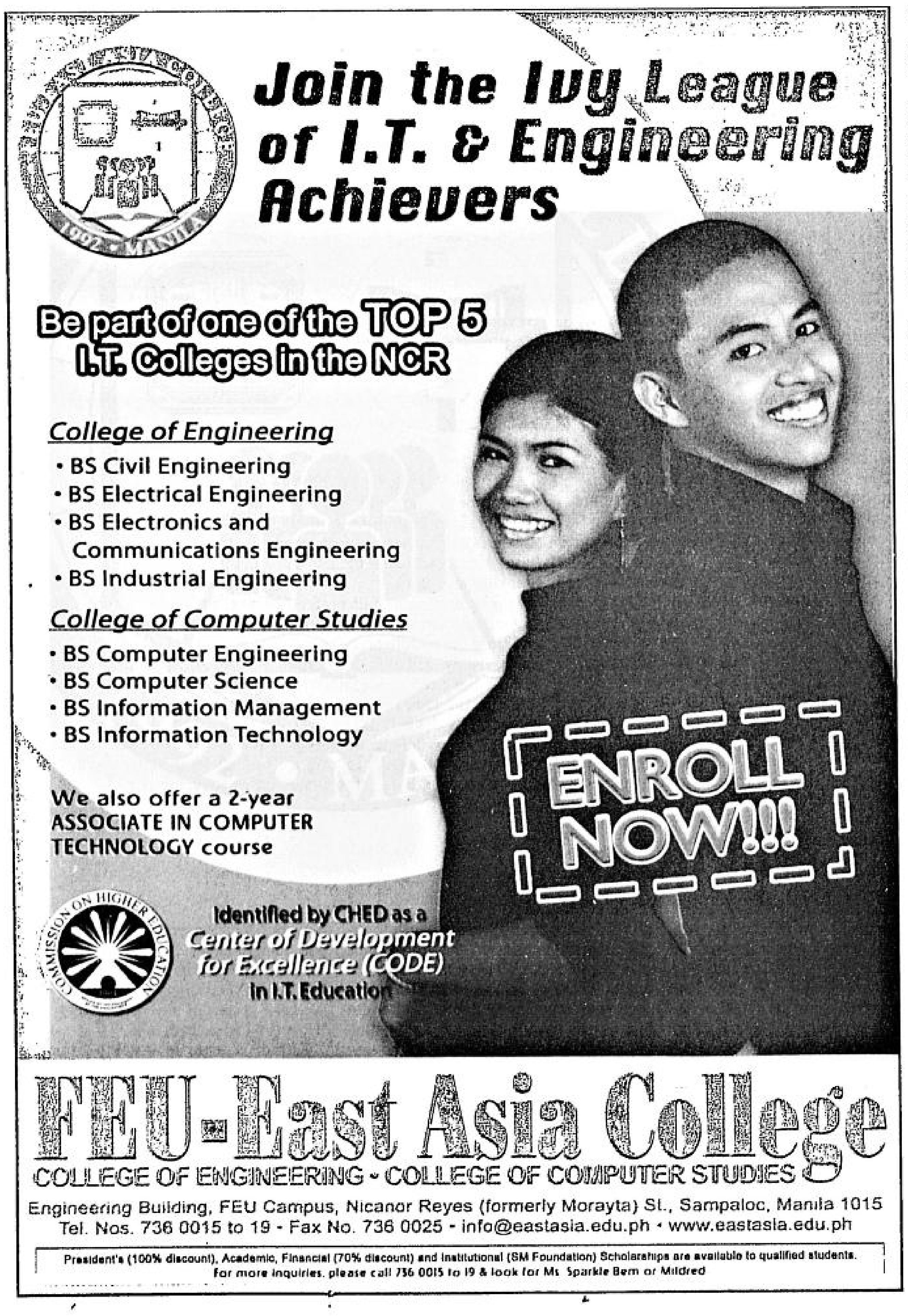

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E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

SUERTRES 1 9 7
SIX DIGIT (In exact order) 5 7 7 8 6 8

6/42 Luzon 1 10 11 23 25 38
Vis-Min 3 7 18 23 27 42

4 die, 17 hurt as bus slams van

By Margaux Ortiz

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All the fatalities were passengers of a green Hyundai van, which was slammed by a Panda bus around 6:40 a.m. on Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard, according to SPO2 Orlando De Leon.

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METROBRIEFS

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Made to feel important, six transport heads go for GMA

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Arciaga said the mayor allegedly "illegally diverted" P484 million of the P759.5 million of the Special Education Fund allocated for the construction of school buildings and the purchase of books. *Margaux Ortiz*

PATROL 117 FETE

Interior and Local Government Secretary Jose Lina Jr. on Tuesday honored police and fire personnel who made the department's Patrol 117 project a success. Cited were members of the Makati City police Station, the Nasugbu municipal police station and the Caloocan City fire station. Thirty-four other groups and individuals were also honored.
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

'Explosion' mars rally of Lacson

EVERYTHING was going on smoothly until the people heard an explosion. Then someone yelled there was a bomb.

And just as presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson was about to speak, the people who went to listen to his speech in Malabon City on Monday night started running away.

The commotion left at least five people injured and canceled Lacson's next scheduled rally in Navotas, congressional candidate Cip Lacson told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Cip is running against Roberto Cinco and incumbent Rep. Ricky Sandoval in Malabon-Navotas district.

A speaker was introducing Lacson about 9 p.m. Monday in C4 Road when they suddenly heard an explosion that sent the crowd panicking. The people went back after 10 minutes after being assured it was not a bomb.

The explosion came from an electric wire from the sound system, which sparked, police special weapons and tactics team leader Ralp Racaza said in his report.

He added that the spark could have been triggered by overloading. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Cariño duly elected solon of Pasig—SC

WITH only six days left before the elections, the Supreme Court en banc affirmed yesterday the decision of the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET) declaring businessman Noel "Toti" Cariño as the duly-elected representative of Pasig City.

In an en banc resolution dated April 27, 2004, but released only on Monday, the High Tribunal dismissed the petition filed by lawyer Henry Lanot, who questioned the HRET decision that declared Cariño as the winner of the 2001 congressional polls in Pasig.

Lanot served as Pasig representative for the past three years.

"Acting on the petition, the Court resolved to dismiss the same for failure thereof to sufficiently show that any grave abuse of discretion was committed by the HRET in rendering the challenged decision and resolution which, on the contrary, appear to be in accord with the facts and applicable law and jurisprudence," the High Court resolution said.

"It is ironic that the decision came this late but I am happy that no less than the Supreme Court validated my election as congressman," Cariño told reporters and supporters in a press conference yesterday.

The HRET stripped Lanot of the congressional seat in January following a recount that showed Cariño winning over him by as much as 2,000 votes in 2001.

Cariño, who is running for the same seat, will sit in the House when the 12th Congress opens this June. He said his first and last act could be to look into how Lanot used funds, popularly known as pork barrel, intended for Pasig.

Meanwhile, Lanot is running for mayor against Cariño's ally, former local chief executive Vicente "Enteng" Eusebio. *Michael Jobert Navallo*

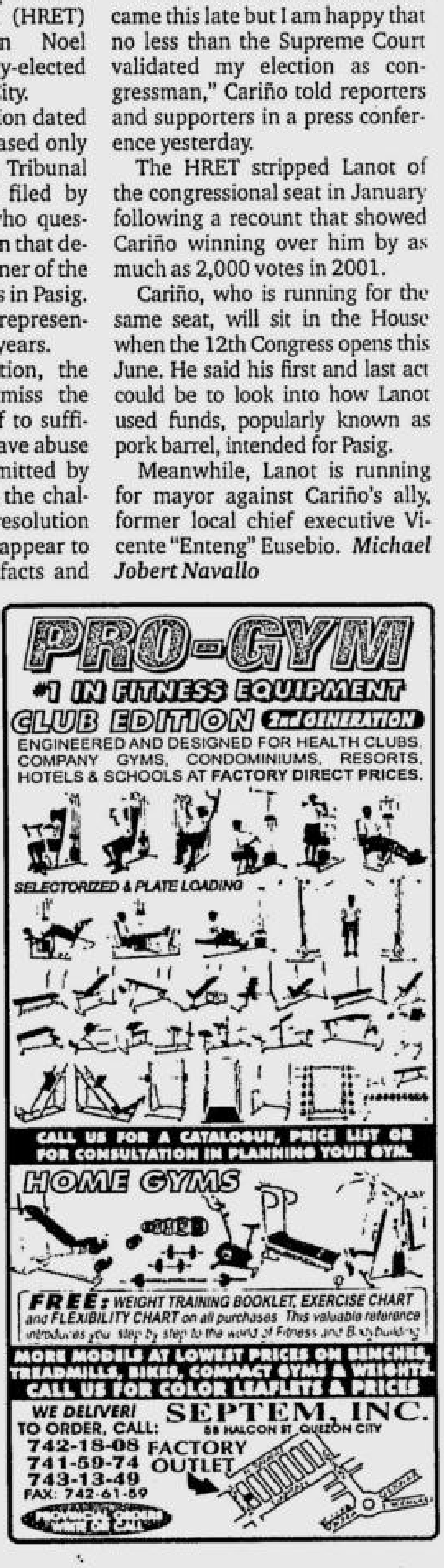
The line's dead, sorry

IF YOU plan to call up the Commission on Elections office in Caloocan City's first district, don't bother.

There will be no answer. The last time a phone rang there was six months ago.

Elections officer Sheila Roxas said their phone line had been cut because the office had not paid its phone bills.

Well, there's always her cellphone, Roxas said. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*



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Even at fires, bets try to score points, win votes

WITH days to go before the elections, candidates and their supporters are intensifying their campaign gimmicks.

In Quezon City, even the fire that swept through the densely-populated Sitio San Roque, Barangay Bagong Pag-asa Saturday night became an opportunity for political candidates not only to help the victims but also to win votes.

On Sunday, President Macapagal Arroyo visited the area, whose residents have reportedly been supporting the presidential bid of Fernando Poe Jr., according to local leaders.

Among the local candidates who visited the community and distributed relief goods, the residents said, were former mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. and incumbent Mayor Feliciano Belmonte.

However, Carmelo Kaagbay, head of the Philippine National Red Cross team in the area, said the candidates violated the Omnibus Election Code by going to the place and directly giving out relief goods to the victims.

But in separate phone interviews, Mathay and Belmonte said they have nothing to do with the distribution of the relief goods.

Local community leaders had expressed belief that the fire was politically motivated, meant to disperse the residents and dissuade them from voting their presidential bet.

But initial investigation showed that the fire, which left a polio victim dead and at least 4,000 families homeless, was caused by an unattended candle, police said. *Tina Santos, Melodie Tumambing, Mel Lawrence de Guzman*

SUERTRES
1 9 7
SIX DIGIT (In exact order)
5 7 7 8 6 8

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

6/42 Luzon
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Vis-Min
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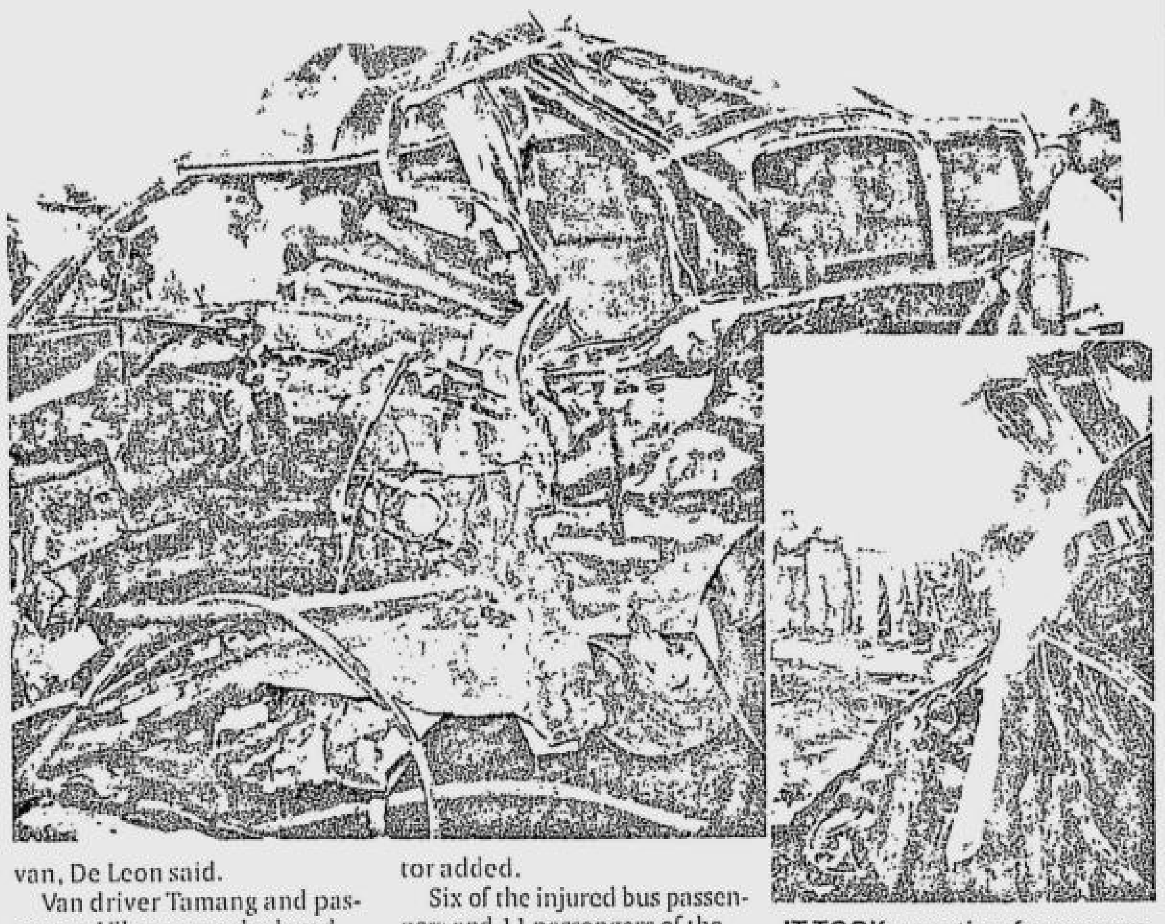

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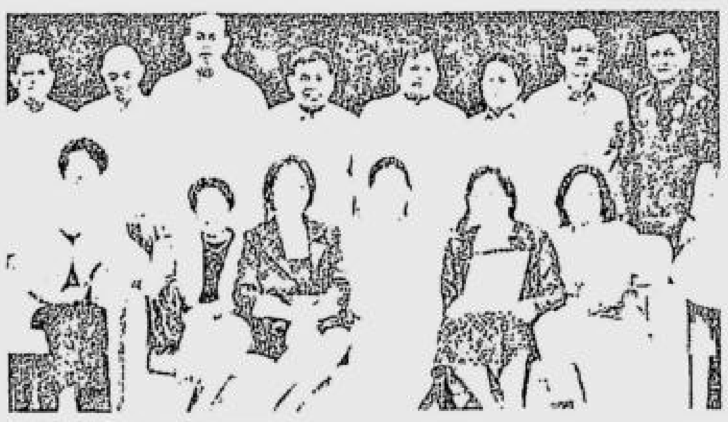
Former Councilor Rafael Arciaga has filed cases of plunder and malversation of P2.04 billion in public funds against Fresnedi and other Muntinlupa officials.

Arciaga said the mayor allegedly "illegally diverted" P484 million of the P759.5 million of the Special Education Fund allocated for the construction of school buildings and the purchase of books. *Margaux Ortiz*



PATROL 117 FETE
Interior and Local Government Secretary Jose Lina Jr. on Tuesday honored police and fire personnel who made the department's Patrol 117 project a success. Cited were members of the Makati City police Station, the Nasugbu municipal police station and the Caloocan City fire station. Thirty-four other groups and individuals were also honored. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

'Explosion' mars rally of Lacson

EVERYTHING was going on smoothly until the people heard an explosion. Then someone yelled there was a bomb.

And just as presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson was about to speak, the people who went to listen to his speech in Malabon City on Monday night started running away.

The commotion left at least five people injured and canceled Lacson's next scheduled rally in Navotas, congressional candidate Cip Lacson told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Cip is running against Roberto Cinco and incumbent Rep. Ricky Sandoval in Malabon-Navotas district.

A speaker was introducing Lacson about 9 p.m. Monday in C4 Road when they suddenly heard an explosion that sent the crowd panicking. The people went back after 10 minutes after being assured it was not a bomb.

The explosion came from an electric wire from the sound system, which sparked, police special weapons and tactics team leader Ralp Racaza said in his report.

He added that the spark could have been triggered by overloading. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Cariño duly elected solon of Pasig—SC

WITH only six days left before the elections, the Supreme Court en banc affirmed yesterday the decision of the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET) declaring businessman Noel "Toti" Cariño as the duly-elected representative of Pasig City.

In an en banc resolution dated April 27, 2004, but released only on Monday, the High Tribunal dismissed the petition filed by lawyer Henry Lanot, who questioned the HRET decision that declared Cariño as the winner of the 2001 congressional polls in Pasig.

Lanot served as Pasig representative for the past three years.

"Acting on the petition, the Court resolved to dismiss the same for failure thereof to sufficiently show that any grave abuse of discretion was committed by the HRET in rendering the challenged decision and resolution which, on the contrary, appear to be in accord with the facts and applicable law and jurisprudence," the High Court resolution said.

"It is ironic that the decision came this late but I am happy that no less than the Supreme Court validated my election as congressman," Cariño told reporters and supporters in a press conference yesterday.

The HRET stripped Lanot of the congressional seat in January following a recount that showed Cariño winning over him by as much as 2,000 votes in 2001.

Cariño, who is running for the same seat, will sit in the House when the 12th Congress opens this June. He said his first and last act could be to look into how Lanot used funds, popularly known as pork barrel, intended for Pasig.

Meanwhile, Lanot is running for mayor against Cariño's ally, former local chief executive Vicente "Enteng" Eusebio. *Michael Jobert Navallo*

The line's dead, sorry

IF YOU plan to call up the Commission on Elections office in Caloocan City's first district, don't bother.

There will be no answer. The last time a phone rang there was six months ago.

Elections officer Sheila Roxas said their phone line had been cut because the office had not paid its phone bills.

Well, there's always her cellphone, Roxas said. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

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Even at fires, bets try to score points, win votes

WITH days to go before the elections, candidates and their supporters are intensifying their campaign gimmicks.

In Quezon City, even the fire that swept through the densely-populated Sitio San Roque, Barangay Bagong Pag-asa Saturday night became an opportunity for political candidates not only to help the victims but also to win votes.

[illegible] Macapagal-Arroyo visited the area, whose residents have reportedly been supporting the presidential bid of Fernando Poe Jr., according to local leaders.

Among the local candidates who visited the community and distributed relief goods, the residents said, were former mayor Ismael Mathay Jr. and incumbent Mayor Feliciano Belmonte.

However, Carmela [illegible], head of the Philippine National Red Cross team in the area, said the candidates violated the Omnibus Election Code by going to the place and directly giving out relief goods to the victims.

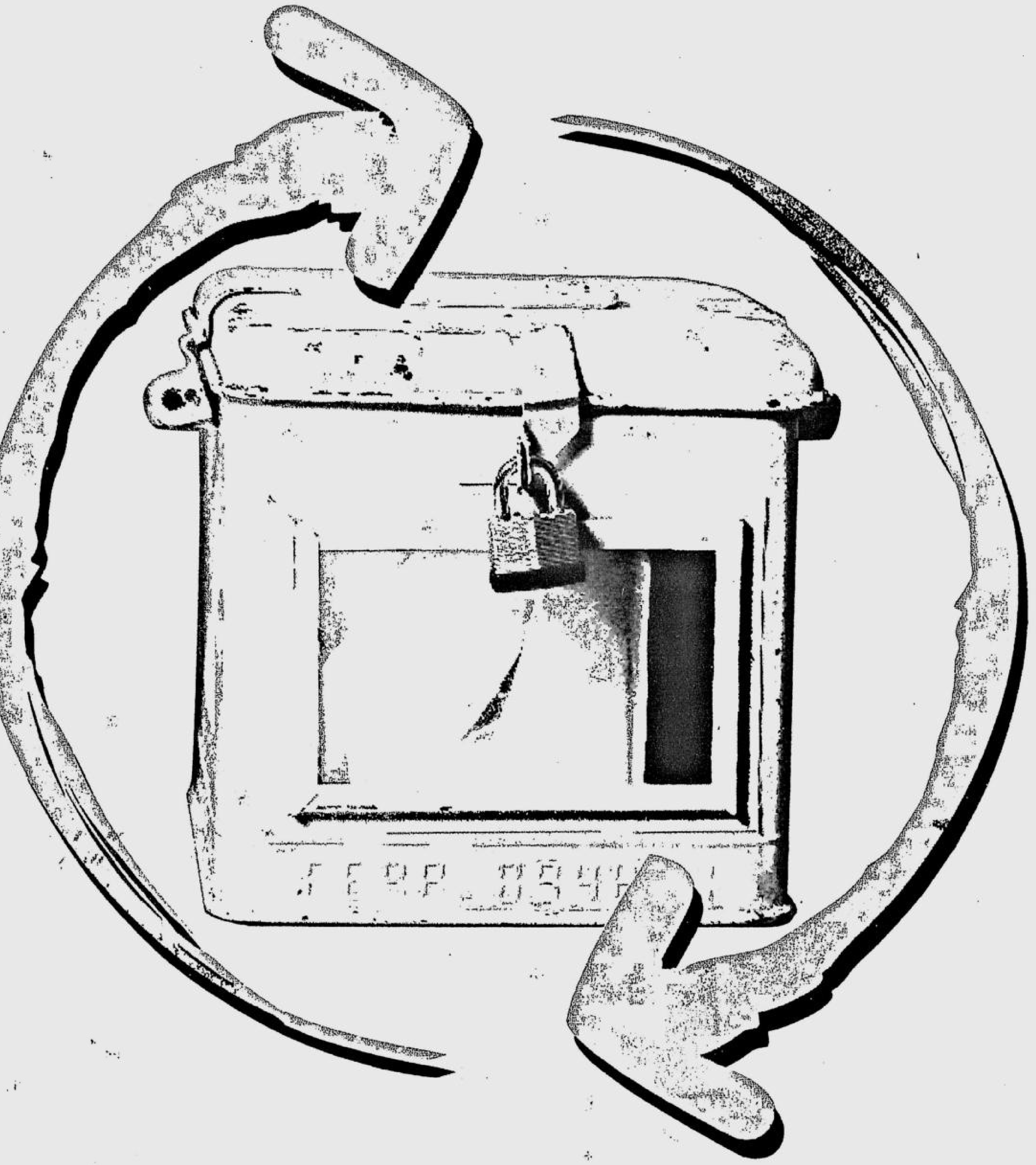
But in separate phone interviews, Mathay and Belmonte said they have nothing to do with the distribution of the relief goods.

Local community leaders had expressed belief that the fire was politically motivated, meant to disperse the residents and dissuade them from voting their presidential bet.

But initial investigation showed that the fire, which left a polio victim dead and at least 4,000 families homeless, was caused by an unattended candle, police said. *Tina Santos, Melodie Tumambing, Mel Lawrence de Guzman*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

It's not just the number of votes cast...



It's about democracy in action.

With the elections mere days away, it is important that we see with clarity the platforms of every presidential aspirant. The Philippine Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), with the support of SMART Communications, Inc., endeavors to make each vote cast an informed one. To help educate voters, the PPCRV and SMART have launched a series of television ads through the Council's Voters Education Program (VOT-ED).

PPCRV advocates responsible citizenship through conscience, and does not vocally support any political party or candidate. Keeping this in mind, SMART wholeheartedly stands behind PPCRV in its commitment to an educated, and peaceful 2004 elections.

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SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA Playoffs-Hornets vs Heat, Game 7, Eastern First Round; 7 a.m. (r-8p.m.); Solar Sports—New Orleans and Miami slug it out in this decisive match to determine Indiana's next opponent.

TENNIS: Telecom Italia Masters; 8:30 p.m. and 11 p.m.; Star Sports—Action moves on to the second round in Rome.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

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Pacquiao the uneasy favorite

By Recah Trinidad

LAS VEGAS, Nevada—Manny Pacquiao, noted for bucking impossible odds, appeared a little awkward when he returned yesterday as a full-fledged star to this gambling city where he's been installed a strong favorite to win his world title fight on Saturday.

The celebrated Filipino boxer, who had fought his best as an underdog, was given a 3-2 edge yesterday to wrest Juan Manuel Marquez's WBA and IBF featherweight crowns.

Pacquiao appeared uneasy in his new role.

In 2001, he was rated totally insignificant when, as a last-minute substitute, he upset African Lehlo Ledwabah to win the IBF super bantamweight crown.

Oddsmakers had rated that bout a budding mismatch and did not carry it on the post boards.

Equally awful were the 4-1 odds when Pacquiao clashed with the legendary Marco Antonio Barrera in Texas whom he humbled and stopped in one of the biggest upsets in modern-day boxing.

Fighting as the odds-on favorite could indeed put extra pressure on Pacquiao. But he was not saying he would have preferred fighting as an underdog against Marquez.

All Pacquiao could do was smile and shrug upon being accorded a VIP welcome at the 5,000-room MGM Grand Hotel and Casino, site of the world featherweight boxing championship on May 8 (May 9, Manila time).

Pacquiao, together with his big entourage, was ushered into a special function room and treated like a visiting dignitary.

He had to hide his happy amazement as he waded through several lobbies where big framed posters of him in a fighting pose are displayed prominently, dwarfing the sepia pictures of famous American movie stars, including Ronald Reagan, around the hotel.

For the first time since coming here last March 19, Pacquiao had to skip his regular afternoon drills after a five-hour drive in a convoy of three vehicles from Hollywood to this busy, over-lighted capital.

slightly hotter.

DAN TRINIDAD

THE FLAG is prominently displayed at the Hollywood gym where Pacquiao worked out.

He's scheduled to jog around a track oval, resume his hard afternoon drills in a nearby gym, before going through a routine MRI test today.

The weigh-in has been scheduled on Friday, eve of the championship that will be officiated by veteran Joe Cortez, the same referee who worked Pacquiao's victorious bout against Ledwabah.

Promoters said the three judges who will work the championship are Guy Jutras of Canada, Bart Clemens of Nevada and Clark Samartino of Rhode Island.

In an effort to show the Philippines' best to the world, Boying Nazario, son of Pacquiao's business manager, said songstress Lani Misalucha has agreed to sing the national anthem during the gala night.

As displayed on the sports book boards around casinos here Marquez is –145 and Pacquiao +165.

In plain gambling parlance, it's "lotres," said Pacquiao's handlers.

Gambling tellers here say the figures mean that if you gamble $165 for Pacquiao, you win $100; while if you bet $100 on Marquez, you could take home $145. Pacquiao himself had earlier cautioned fans from getting carried away and gambling heavily on him. He insisted boxing should not be turned into a gambling game.

Secret weakness

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

LAS VEGAS, Nevada—No single peddler of talent, no matter how shrewd and seasoned, could sell Manny Pacquiao the way Murad Muhammad does.

Murad, as most Pinoy fight fans must know by now, is Pacquiao's promoter in the US.

As part of the Muhammad Ali entourage that came to the Philippines for the Thrilla in Manila classic in 1975, Murad knows what great boxing talent is.

You bet the man has seen them all.

But Murad's mouth could not help but water, as though he's lusting for something succulent and sweet, whenever he speaks of Pacquiao.

***

Man, oh man, he's a miracle worker, Murad swooned when asked the other day if he had seen improvement in Pacquiao since the last time.

Don't call it improvement, Murad explained.

He just keeps adding a new dimension to his game each day, Murad said, he keeps getting better and better.

Not only that. Murad said Pacquiao doesn't know how to get tired.

And he loves working hard, very hard.

Murad said Pacquiao is, in truth a 20-round fighter, very, very rare.

***

Look, he continued, Ali, Foreman, Roy Jones, I've been with them, but these greats also get tired.

He said these greats also pause and take their time in training.

Not Pacquiao, Murad explained, his eyes rolling in delight.

Pacquiao breathes through his ears, he said.

The way Murad had observed it, Pacquiao is miracle.

In the final week of training at the Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood alone, Pacquiao sparred at least three times for 12 successive rounds.

But, after each sparring, he would cap his regimen with over 12 rounds of shadow boxing, punching the mitts, calisthenics, etc.

His handlers said Pacquiao works no less than 25 full rounds each day he goes to the gym.

***

This only means one thing. If his opponent wants to beat Pacquiao, he cannot try it in the area of stamina or staying power.

There's a better part to shoot at if Juan Manuel Marquez hopes to win on Saturday.

Yes, Pacquiao has a weakness, an easy spot that could be exploited.

Modesty aside, this reporter knows about it.

But, as in the secret weapon which Pacquiao claimed he has perfected with trainer Freddie Roach, that soft, soggy losing spot will have to remain hidden.

Sorry about that. But to the truly curious, here's a hint: the weak spot is not a spot at all.

It's more of a principle, an old, bad habit that could work against Pacquiao.

But, first of all, the aspirant must succeed in pushing Pacquiao to re-embrace that old fault.

Yes, Pacquiao, despite the growing odds, the obvious edge in skill, speed, stamina and power, is not unbeatable.

Unfortunately for his foe, Pacquiao is fully informed about his secret weakness.

Pistons defense overwhelms Nets

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan—Detroit's defense, the best all season in the National Basketball Association, overpowered New Jersey here Monday, giving the Pistons a 78-56 triumph in their second-round playoff opener.

The Nets sank only 19-of-70 shots, a woeful 27 percent, and set club playoff records for scoring futility with only 35 first-half points, 39 points after three quarters and their final total.

The clubs combined for the second-lowest point total in NBA playoff history.

Only reserve Tamar Slay's basket with 42 seconds remaining enabled the Nets to avoid matching the NBA all-time record for fewest points in a playoff game, 54, set by Utah against Chicago in 1998.

"Jersey is a transition team," Detroit's Rasheed Wallace said. "You slow that down, make them play a half-court game...you take away their game."

Richard Hamilton and Tayshaun Prince each scored 15 points while Ben Wallace added 13 for the Pistons, who will try to make it 2-0 in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference series in game two here Friday.

New Jersey, seeking a third consecutive trip to the NBA Finals, had won 14 consecutive playoff games against Eastern Conference foes, including a sweep of the Pistons in last year's final.

The Nets, who had only 11 second-quarter points, fell behind 37-25 after the lowest-scoring first half in NBA playoff history. A 16-3 Detroit run early in the third quarter sealed the Nets' fate.

Kerry Kittles scored 15 points for New Jersey, while star guard Jason Kidd scored only nine points.

"It was just a bad night," Kidd said. "We were playing a different game out there. We were trying to go for the low score." *AFP*

Purefoods tries to get back into the groove

PUREFOODS tries to put an end to a six-game losing spell in the PBA Gran Matador Fiesta Conference today when it collides with dangerous Shell at the Araneta Coliseum.

The TJ Hotdogs share the mark in futility with idle Barangay Ginebra and are raring to get back on track in their 4:45 p.m. confrontation with the Turbo Chargers.

Alaska, meanwhile, shoots for solo second place yet again, hoping to take the momentum of a classic double-overtime victory the last time out against Sta. Lucia in the second game at 7 p.m.

The Aces came charging back from five points down inside the final 34 seconds opposite Shell on Saturday, winning the longest game of the year on the fourth triple double of import Galen Young.

But the story of the day will have to be the Purefoods-Shell contest as the Hotdogs have continued to struggle despite bringing in a new import in Tyrone Washington.

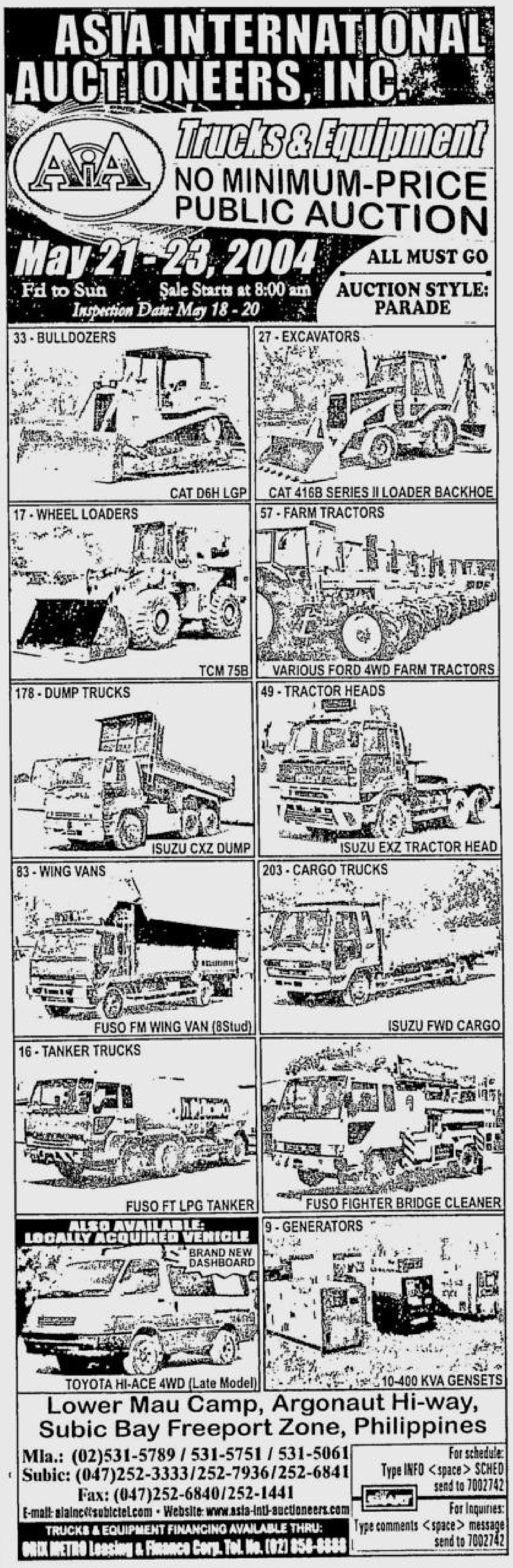
In the cellar with a 3-10 card, Purefoods needs to post wins in a string if it hopes to have an even chance of advancing to the quarterfinals.

The top two teams after the double round eliminations earn byes into the next round. The bottom two teams, on the other hand, draw Nos. 3 and 4 and will have to beat their opponents twice to avoid elimination.

Musong Castillo, Contributor

STANDINGS	W	L
San Miguel	12	1
Alaska	9	4
Coca-Cola	9	4
Talk 'N Text	7	6
Red Bull	6	7
Sta. Lucia	5	8
Ginebra	5	8
Shell	5	8
FedEx	4	9
Purefoods	3	10

GAMES TODAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:45 p.m.—Shell vs. Purefoods
7 p.m.—Alaska vs. Sta. Lucia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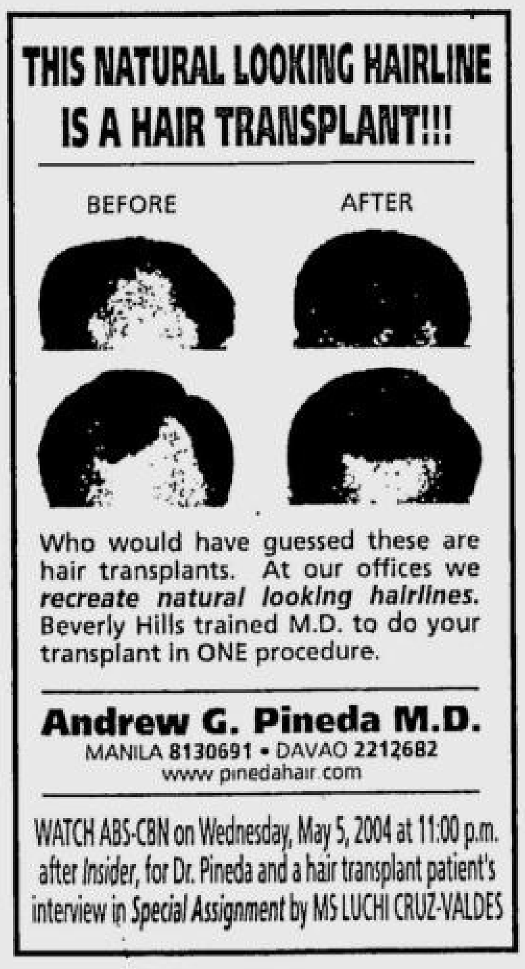
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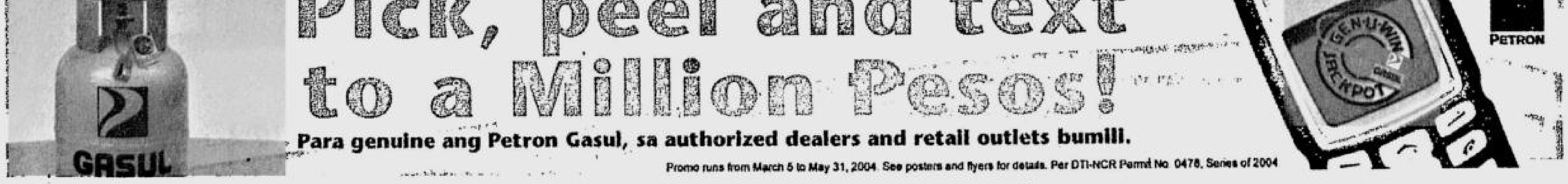
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Bibat paces Samsung golf

YOUNG Michael Bibat led a splurge by the Southwoods mainstays with a one-under-par 71 yesterday to lead the field by one stroke after the first round of the Samsung Amateur Tour's kickoff leg at the Legends course of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club.

Bibat tallied nines of 34-37 to pace Gene Bondoc, Aran Olea, Lyndon Barril, Mark Lopez and Toru Nakajima, who each shot a 72, in the championship division that has been stretched to 72 holes for the Tour's third season.

Alone at 73 was Kim Chang Hoi and another stroke back at 74 was Southwoods' Justin Tambunting.

Jungolfer John Kier Abdon joined Mari Hechanova and Jay Bayron at 76, with Ronnie Torrecampo, Dave Hernandez, Yoyong Velez and reigning national seniors champion Iggy Clavecilla another stroke adrift at 77.

Many-time amateur champion Tommy Manotoc struggled all the day and wound up with an 83.

This year's Samsung Tour, co-sponsored by Tokyo Tokyo, Gatorade, Philippine Airlines as the official carrier, Adidas Taylor Made, KZG by Custom Clubmakers, Pink Patio Boracay, Coppertone Sport and Rogin-E, blasted off with an overflow cast of 158 players.

The championship field of 27 players will be reduced to the best 10 scores plus ties after today's second round.

SPORTSWATCH

Singh tops Orleans golf

NEW ORLEANS—Fiji's Vijay Singh fired five birdies and an eagle over the final eight holes to erase a six-stroke deficit and win the New Orleans Classic, his second PGA victory in as many weeks. Reigning US PGA money champion Singh carded a nine-under par 63, one stroke off his career-best round, to finish on 22-under 266, one stroke ahead of Mickelson and fellow American Joe Ogilvie. *AFP*

Don Enrique takes it

DON Enrique Heights stunned defending champion Philam Homes to rule the first round of the north sector tournament of the Nokia Intervillage North golf series with 296 points at The Orchard's Palmer Course Monday. Romeo Ignacio, Amado Castro and Eddie Silverio shot identical 39 points under the Stableford scoring system to set the tone for Don Enrique Heights' romp. Philam Homes accounted for 292. Corinthian came in third with 282 and White Plains fourth with 278.

Batangas five joins NBC

BATANGAS has joined the National Basketball Conference (NBC) to complete the North cast in the NBC national championship starting on May 22 in Baguio City and May 23 in Cagayan de Oro City. Owned by Mayor Tita Reyes of Malvar town and businessman Bernie Maranan, the new NBC team will join Baguio City, Pampanga and Spring Cooking Oil-San Pablo in the North Conference. Former Batangas Blades Ralph Rivera, Jayson and Jun Cuevas and Ariel de Castro will banner the team to be managed by engineer Roel Galang, with Genny Lat as his assistant.

SMC All-Stars prevail

THE SAN Miguel All-Stars, led by Allan Caidic, Samboy Lim and Hector Calma, overcame the combined talents of former RP teammate Jerry Codiñera, ex-Purefoods center Chris Cantojos, Sta. Lucia Realty coach Alfrancis Chua and the Barrio Obrero Youth Athletic Association Selection, 131-101, Sunday in Tondo II, Manila. Hosted by Manila District II council bet Rolan Valeriano, the exhibition game was made possible through All-Stars officials Manny Liwag and Eric Altamirano and SMC corporate communications office officer Serge Alombro. PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad served as master of ceremony.

Marilao cage clinic

MILO BEST Center will hold a clinic from May 17-22 at the Marilao Sports Complex in Marilao, Bulacan. Organized by Pancho Manalad and Manu Iñigo, the clinic for boys and girls is being held in cooperation with three-term Marilao Mayor Nonoy Duran and his daughter, Mahal Ko Ang Marilao Movement chair Berna Duran-Velasco. Interested parties may call Manalad at (044) 7112481 or Iñigo at (02) 2400548.

Fil-Estate summer camps

THE FIL-ESTATE Sports Foundation Inc. (Fesfi) summer swimming and tennis camps remain open to enrollees for May. The two-part swimming classes are being conducted by Melbourne Olympian Gertrudes "Tuding" Lozada at the Manila Southwoods Sports Club in Carmona, Cavite. The tennis clinic is being managed by former RP Davis Cup team captain Manny Tecson at the Manila Southwoods and Bramante Tennis Courts in Renaissance Center, Pasig City. For inquiries, call Tuding Lozada at 805-2780 and 0917-8436954 (swimming) and Linda/Manny Tecson at 938-9522 and 939-4851 (tennis) or Jerry Tripulca at 0917-8981516.

Barcelona-Sales bout

REIGNING RP junior bantamweight champ Eric Barcelona and RP No. 12 Mark Sales face off in the semifinal round of the 2004 Philippine Pro-Boxing League National Invitational junior bantamweight championship. The winner will move on to meet RP No. 2 Sherwin Paro in the finals of the tournament seen every Wednesday at 9 p.m. on IBC-13.

Tan clinches 2 crowns

MAASIN, Leyte—Jeedree Tan blanked Harold Trinidad, 6-0, 6-0, then routed June Ryan Montalbo, 6-2, 6-1, Monday to become a double titlist in the 2004 Milo Junior Tennis Cup & Regional Workshop at the Maasin Tennis Club here. Tan bagged the boys' 18-under and boys' 16-under titles and shared the limelight with Cris Jan Arnol in the unisex 10-under, Amiel Aya-ay in the boys' 12-under, June Ryan in the boys' 14-under, Salvanette Hermosilla in the girls' 12-under, Abegail Borres in the girls' 14-under, and Zenros Gaviola in the girls' 16-under brackets.

Samala gains q'finals

THIRD seed Kristel Samala defeated Christine Usman, 6-2, 6-2, and Melody Barraquias outclassed Mary Ann Santos, 6-0, 6-1, yesterday to enter the girls' 18-under quarterfinals in the Truflex National Age-Group Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. In other matches, Cristina Santos downed Danielle Maria Hallare, 6-2, 6-0; May Herrera clobbered Olivia Molhant, 6-1, 6-0; and Karen Reyes trounced Alianne Gumban, 6-0, 6-3.

Negros Coliseum derby

THUNDERBIRD Multi-Grain Concentrate and Conditioner throws its support to the Negros Coliseum 2nd Year Anniversary 5-Cock Derby on June 3-5. Derby host Otec Geroso said a guaranteed cash prize of P500,000 is at stake for an entry fee of P5,000. Meanwhile, it's all systems go for the Malaybalay City Pre-Fiesta 5-Cock Derby on May 12-14, which will be hosted by Boni Valiente (0916-9237397) and Nieto Unabia (0917-7078195).

Pair of upsets rocks PBL

ISMAEL Junio hit a triple with 1.8 seconds left to lift Montaña Pawnshop to a nerve-wracking 76-75 upset of defending champion Hapee Toothpaste yesterday and deny the Teeth Sparklers an outright berth in semifinals of the 2004 PBL Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

In the second game, Roland Pascual emerged from a loose ball scramble to score Blu Star's winning edge in a 77-74 defeat of favored Welcoat.

The scores:

First Game

MONTAÑA 76—Junio 17, Salvador 14, Magpayo 12, Espintu 10, Baluyot 8, Vergara 6, Baguion 4, Buenafe 3 Braga 2, Ilanga C Guerrero 0, Najorda 0.

HAPEE 75—Macapagal 19, Mendoza 13, Oreta 8 Moore 6, Tan 6, Cordero 6, Omiping 5, Juntilla 4, Dy 4, Du alan 2, Mercado 2.

Quarters: 18-17, 33-36, 53-48, 76-75.

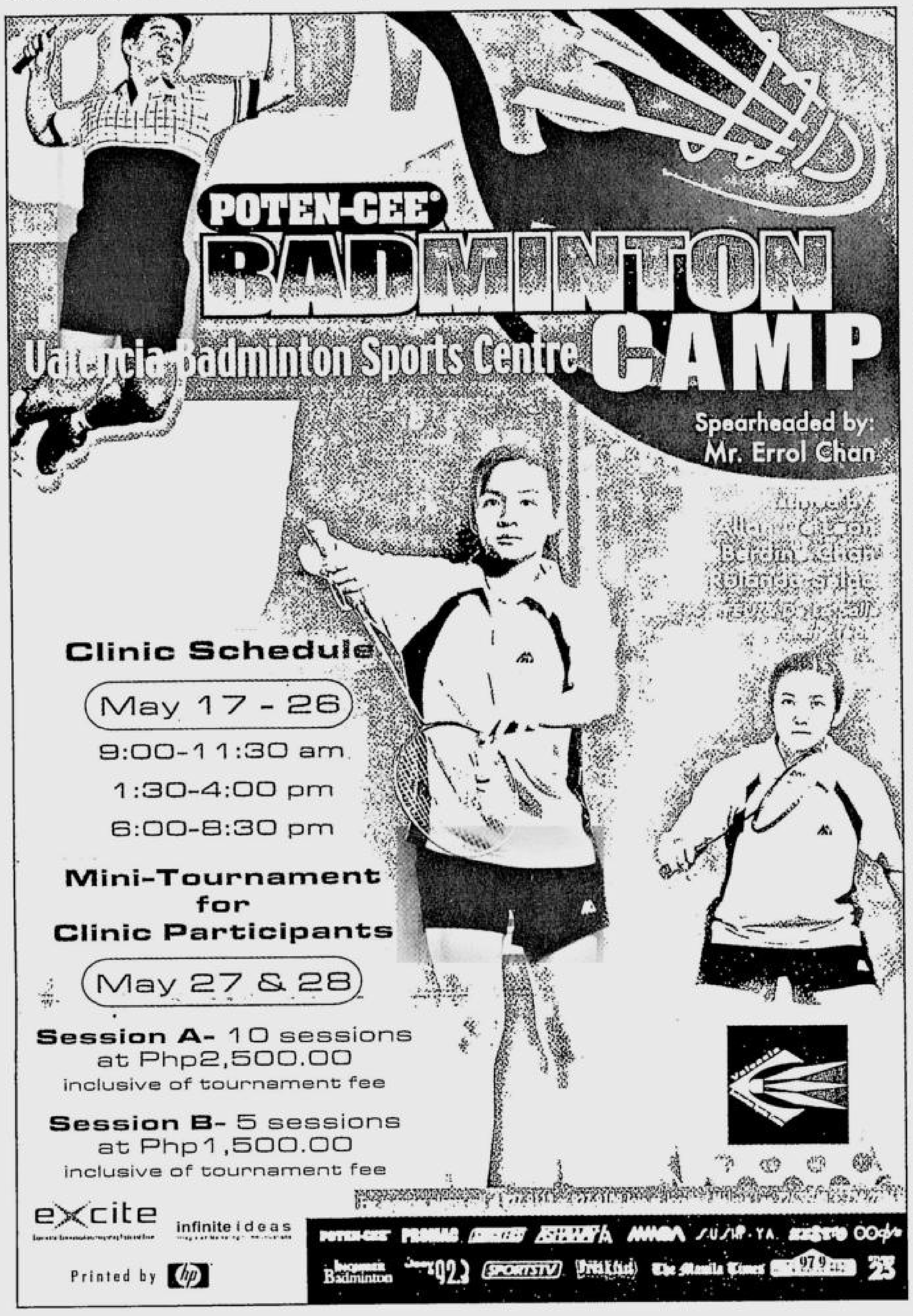
Second Game

BLU STAR 77—Dela Cuesta 20, Mesina 17, Villamin 13, Alfa 4, Gamboa 4, Tagupa 4, Canaleta 2, Aquino 0, Santos 0.

WELCOAT 74—Capus 21, Aldeguer 13, Tolomia 13, Tangka 6, Ortiguerra 8, Reyes 4, Gatumbato 4, Estrada 4, Uy 2, Celo 0

Quarters: 19-19, 41-39, 59-57, 77-74.

Trina Ibarl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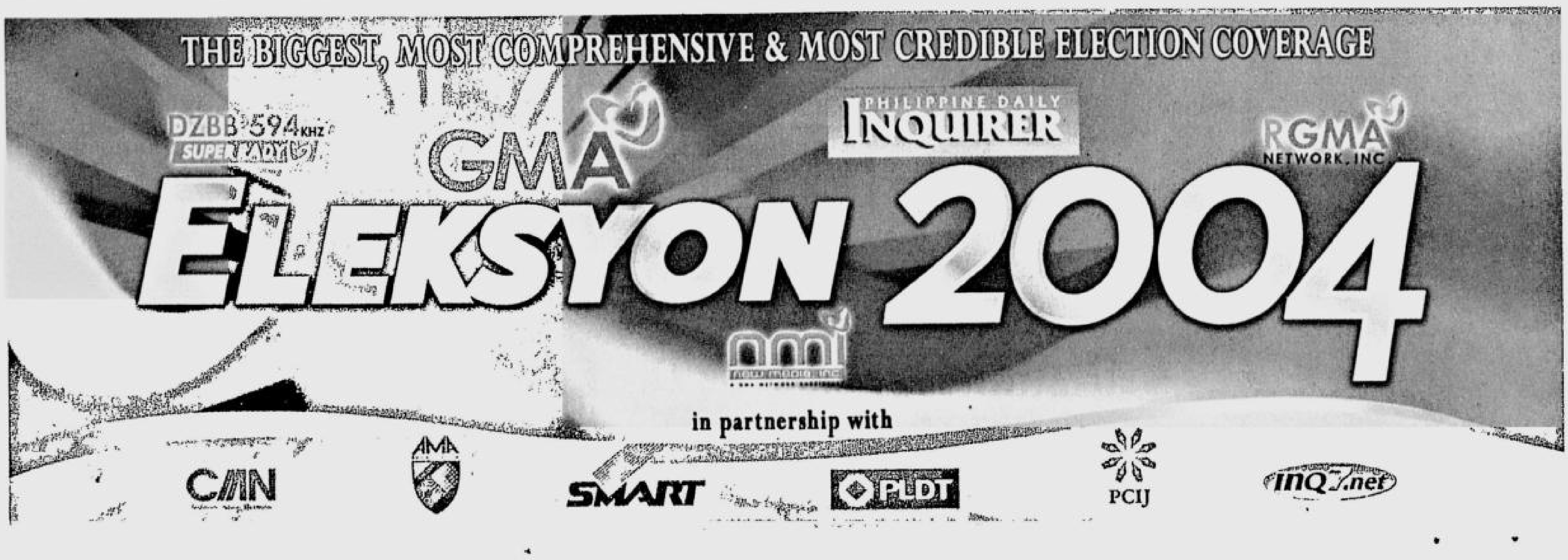
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A long-lasting tie-up lives on

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

FOR NEARLY a decade, the Philippine Sportswriters Association and Photokina Marketing Corp., local distributors of Agfa Color and Red Bull energy drinks, have teamed up to bring into focus current sports issues and give honors and appreciation to outstanding achievers through the weekly Sports Forum and the annual PSA Awards Night at the Manila Pavilion.

Solid as a rock, the partnership between the country's oldest print media organization and the sports-oriented company is expected to continue without interruption.

"We are happy and satisfied with our relationship with the PSA," said the much-admired George Chua, Photokina EVP who is marking another milestone today. "We value this tie-up and we intend to keep it."

Since the tie-up with Photokina, the PSA has become bigger and stronger. In the past, the association had had difficulty raising funds to hold the weekly PSA Forum and the costly PSA Awards Night. But not anymore. Because as major sponsors, Agfa and Red Bull now foot the bill for the dinner, trophies and part of the television coverage, a gesture which started way back in 1994 during my term as PSA president.

Sports has always been part of George Chua's life. As a student, he played football at the Letran College together with Red Bull team manager Tony Chua. As an employee, he was hardworking and honest, rising from the ranks to become a company executive. His words are measured and he avoids personal attacks, proof of his polished and proper upbringing. No wonder the man is liked and respected.

***

THANK YOU, BOY, IT'S GO FOR PSA CUP! We will always remember the late Camilo "Boy" Mendez Jr. as someone who did not shirk his duty as a director of the PSA. In one of his most notable acts, Boy took time out from his busy schedule to seal with Philippine Racing Commission chair Jaime Dilag the staging of the third PSA Cup on May 16 at the Santa Ana Park.

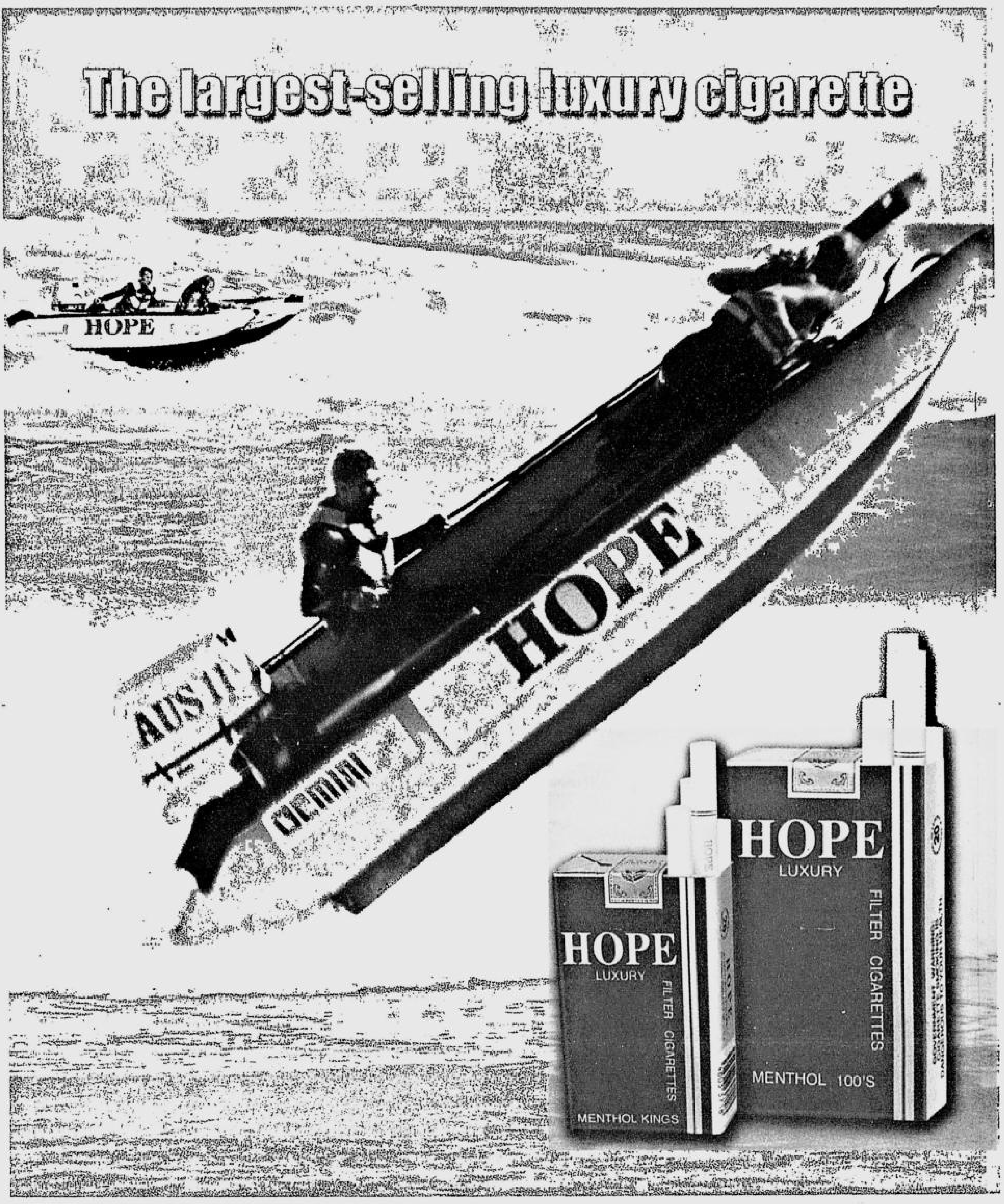
Together with PSA president Jimmy Cantor, Boy finalized with Philracom officials the details of this year's PSA Cup in honor of the late Nereo Andolong, former chair of the National Stud Farm, general manager of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and three-term president of the National Press Club.

A noted racing columnist and chief steward at the Philippine Racing Club Inc., Boy Mendez died at age 65 of heart failure last Saturday while performing his duty at the Santa Ana Park. Earlier in the day, he even submitted his regular column to my son, Dennis, who edits the sports section of the Balita, a vernacular daily.

"The country's horseracing community mourns the death of Boy Mendez," said Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, president of the Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners. "His untimely death is a big loss to the industry."

Speaking of horseracing, the Philracom said it is expecting another banner year after record sales of P2.1 billion were posted in the first quarter of 2004. According to Dilag, gross sales totaled only P1.8 billion during the same period last year.

A former pelotari, Dilag said the P20-million additional budget approved by President Macapagal-Arroyo helped the Philracom in implementing its various projects.



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Annoying distractions on local newscasts

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IT'S such a chore watching local TV newscasts these days. There are so many new distractions that get in the way of our intelligently surveying and analyzing the day's events.

For starters, some female newscasters talk like actresses in TV melodramas, while their male counterparts sound like thugs, *pasyon* singers or call center employees.

The way they look is similarly distracting. Some women are all gussied up to look their glamorous best as though they, and not the news, were what newscasts are all about.

And the men are dressed either like members of the Mafia or like butlers. —More misplaced priorities on the woebegone local boob tube!

If viewers are able to get past these aural and visual distractions, local newscasts' features can be downers in their own right.

A newscaster dishes out not just news but also opinions. The erring show's "newsandviewscast" format should be dis-invented this instant!

Crime stories, the shriller and bloodier the better, have upstaged national and world events as our newscasts' main focus. Come on, what's so vital and important about a rugby raid, a drunken brawl, or an ice-pick stabbing? *Please.*

In addition, the show biz news segment has also been taking up much more TV time than it deserves. Why should a newscast be concerned with starlets' tiffs, show biz crushes, and album launches?

Lately, newscasts have even taken to polling viewers on which female starlet they want to become a male star's girlfriend. —In a *newscast*?! The end of the (TV) world is truly at hand . . .

The question, of course, is why our newscasts are coming up with all of these irritating distractions, instead of simply concentrating on reporting the most important and relevant news of the day.

Obviously, our networks feel that newscasts jazzed up with "entertainment value" rate better with viewers than objective reportage.

Unfortunately, the distractions have distorted news programs' formats to an unacceptable degree, so viewers have to remind the newscasts' personnel on both sides of the camera what their work should be about, and for.

It's sad that we have to do this, because TV people are supposed to be responsible and competent professionals who know what each program format is supposed to focus on. But the competition for ratings on TV has become so stiff that some network people have put their standards on hold, so viewers have to speak up.

'My Wife is a Gangster'

THE KOREAN box-office hit, "My Wife is a Gangster," blends the bravura of martial arts with feisty comedy. The title character first comes on like a sweet, docile wife, but her husband soon discovers that she's the queen of gangland!

A rival faction has gotten interested in her criminal turf and is determined to crush her at all costs. What follows is an "opera" of mayhem and quirky romance as she tries to fend off her attackers while still keeping her role as a loving wife.

The film's plot premise *is* a novel one. Small wonder that it's the first Korean movie that has been sold to a Hollywood studio for a remake.

Jed in Germany

Recording artist Jed Maddela has flown to Germany to perform as special guest singer at a beauty pageant there.

Here at home, he performs at Dusit Hotel on Tuesdays, Strumms Jupiter, Makati, on Thursdays, and Aruba Libis on Fridays. He will also go on a performance tour of Cebu, Bacolod, Iloilo and Davao, culminating in a major concert in Manila in July

---

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie 833-9999

NOW SHOWING

Central

SM MEGAMALL 6331901
1 VAN HELSING
2 PAYCHECK
3 VAN HELSING
4 STARSKY & HUTCH
5 CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
6 MAN ON FIRE
7 HAUNTED SPIRIT
8 SCHOOL OF ROCK
9 I WILL SURVIVE
10 HELLBOY
11 BOOBITA ROSE
12 WHOLE 10 YARDS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9350749
1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 MAN ON FIRE
3 PAYCHECK
4 VAN HELSING
5 STARSKY & HUTCH
6 HELLBOY
7 CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
8 PETER PAN
9 I WILL SURVIVE
10 HAUNTED SPIRIT
11 SCHOOL OF ROCK
12 VAN HELSING

SM CITY MANILA 5239240
1 HELLBOY
2 CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
3 PAYCHECK
4 VAN HELSING
5 VAN HELSING
6 VAN HELSING
7 SCHOOL OF ROCK
8 HAUNTED SPIRIT
9 I WILL SURVIVE
10 I WILL SURVIVE
11 MAN ON FIRE
12 STARSKY & HUTCH

SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9295452
1 HELLBOY
2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 I WILL SURVIVE
4 MAN ON FIRE
5 STARSKY & HUTCH
6 BOOBITA ROSE
7 CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
8 VAN HELSING

SM CITY STA. MESA 7149522 • 7161416
1 I WILL SURVIVE
2 MAN ON FIRE
3 VAN HELSING
4 BOOBITA ROSE
5 VAN HELSING
6 SCHOOL OF ROCK
7 HELLBOY
8 STARSKY & HUTCH
9 CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
10 PETER PAN

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN 2514302
1 HELLBOY
2 VAN HELSING
3 WHOLE 10 YARDS
4 I WILL SURVIVE

North

SM CITY MARILAO (044) 933 2013 to 17
1 HELLBOY
2 I WILL SURVIVE
3 MAN ON FIRE
4 PAYCHECK

SM CITY PAMPANGA 7128015
1 VAN HELSING
2 VAN HELSING
3 PETER PAN
4 SCHOOL OF ROCK
5 MAN ON FIRE
6 I WILL SURVIVE

SM CITY BAGUIO (074) 4464505
1 STARSKY & HUTCH
2 THE CURSE
3 I WILL SURVIVE
4 MAN ON FIRE

South

SM CITY LAS PIÑAS 8066686
1 HELLBOY
2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 VAN HELSING
4 I WILL SURVIVE
5 MAN ON FIRE
6 BOOBITA ROSE
7 CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
8 VAN HELSING
9 STARSKY & HUTCH
10 HAUNTED SPIRIT

SM CITY BICUTAN 7763055
1 VAN HELSING
2 I WILL SURVIVE
3 CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN
4 VAN HELSING

SM SUPER CENTER SUCAT 8294975
1 MAN ON FIRE
2 I WILL SURVIVE
3 VAN HELSING
4 CONFESSIONS... DRAMA QUEEN

SM CITY BACOOR (046)4173868
1 MAN ON FIRE
2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 VAN HELSING
4 I WILL SURVIVE
5 VAN HELSING
6 I WILL SURVIVE
7 HAUNTED SPIRIT
8 HELLBOY

SM CITY LUCENA (042) 7106977-80
1 PETER PAN
2 TAKING LIVES
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 I WILL SURVIVE

Visayas & Mindanao

SM CITY CEBU (032) 2313676
1 HELLBOY
2 VAN HELSING
3 PETER PAN
4 SCHOOL ROCK
5 PAYCHECK
6 ACACIA
7 I WILL SURVIVE
8 HELLBOY

SM CITY ILOILO (033) 3209422
1 UNINVITED
2 RESERVED
3 PAYCHECK
4 I WILL SURVIVE
5 PETER PAN
6 HELLBOY
7 RESERVED
8 TAKING LIVES

SM CITY DAVAO (082) 2976998
1 VAN HELSING
2 PETER PAN
3 I WILL SURVIVE
4 PAYCHECK
5 VAN HELSING
6 HELLBOY

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO (088) 8592884
1 TAKING LIVES
2 PETER PAN
3 THE CURSE
4 HELL BOY

THE PODIUM

1
VAN HELSING
11:00 FS/11:20
MF/2:15/5:10/8:05/10:35
LFS/11:00 LMF/1:30 END

2
STARSKY & HUTCH
11:15FS/1:45
MF/2:00/4:15/6:30/8:45/
10:30 LFS/11:00
LMF/12:45 END

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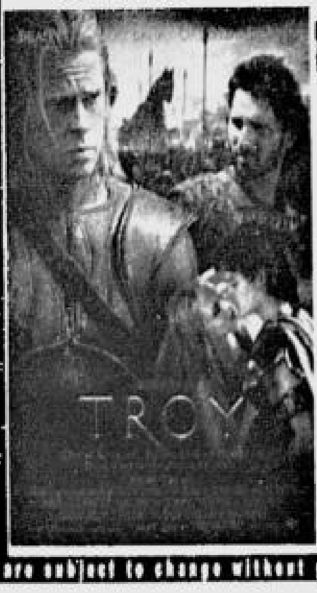

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MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING
EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA (Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) VAN HELSING
2 (SDDS) HELLBOY
3 (DTS) CONFESSION OF DRAMA QUEEN
4 GOLD (DTS) MAN OF FIRE
5 GOLD (DOLBY) VAN HELSING
6 GOLD (SDDS) STARSKY & HUTCH
7 GOLD (DOLBY) VAN HELSING
8 I WILL SURVIVE
9 I WILL SURVIVE
10 SCHOOL OF ROCK

EASTWOOD CINEMAS (Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 CONFESSION OF DRAMA QUEEN
2 (DOLBY) VAN HELSING
3 (DOLBY) STARSKY & HUTCH
4 I WILL SURVIVE

Masagana CINEMA 2000 (Pasay) tel 833.3290 833.3274
1 I WILL SURVIVE
2 VAN HELSING
3 ANIMAL

starmall Movies www.clickthecity.com.ph (Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE
3 I WILL SURVIVE
WHOLE 10 YARD
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) VAN HELSING
5

METROPOLIS star www.clickthecity.com.ph (Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 CHECK - INN
2 ANIMAL
3 HELLBOY
4 I WILL SURVIVE
5 VAN HELSING
6 HAUNTED SPIRIT

star www.clickthecity.com.ph (Las Pinas) tel 873.5004
1 VAN HELSING
2 I WILL SURVIVE

PREMIERE CINEMA (Makati City) tel 892.2503

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Sunshine (FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376
1 EVIL - 4
2 MY GOOD LAWYERS WIFE
3
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City (Manila) tel 734.8588
RESERVE
5
6
7 (DTS)
8 (SDDS)
9 (DOLBY)

Gotesco Grand Central (Caloocan) tel 364.3781
1 ANIMAL
2 HELLBOY
3 MAN OF FIRE
4 (SDDS) STARSKY & HUTCH
5 I WILL SURVIVE
6 (DOLBY) VAN HELSING
7 (DTS) VAN HELSING
8 RESERVE
9 RESERVE

Gotesco Commonwealth tel 951.0083
1 RESERVE
2 (SDDS)
3 (DTS)
4 (DOLBY)
5

Gotesco Ortigas tel 656.6795
1
2
3 (DTS)
4
5

Universal (Manila) tel 733.2470
1 RESERVE

Dilson (Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson CARMEN
Lords MEN'S

Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 I WILL SURVIVE
2 VAN HELSING
3 VENUS
4 RESERVE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) VAN HELSING
2 WHOLE 10 YARD
3 RESERVE
4 I WILL SURVIVE
5 ANIMAL

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 KILL BILL
2 ANIMAL

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
Ali MALL CINEPLEX 7 Tel No. 911-3101 Loc. [illegible]
1 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 I WILL SURVIVE
4 (SDDS) VAN HELSING
5 JERSEY GIRL
6 CONFESSION OF DRAMA QUEEN
7 HELLBOY

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 MAN OF FIRE
2 BONE SNATCHERS
3 I WILL SURVIVE
4 CARMEN

Cine Nepo (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 I WILL SURVIVE
2 HOUSE DEAD
3 (DOLBY) MAN OF FIRE
4 BONE SNATCHERS

Cine Nepo (Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 PETER PAN
2 TAKING LIVES
3 (DOLBY) BUTTERFLY EFFECTS
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall (Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926
1 I WILL SURVIVE
2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 HELLBOY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 I WILL SURVIVE
2 HELLBOY
3 SCHOOL OF ROCK
4 WHOLE 10 YARD

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 I WILL SURVIVE
2 (DOLBY) HELLBOY
3 SCHOOL OF ROCK
4 WHOLE 10 YARD

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) t (045) 9821727
1 PETER PAN
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 (DOLBY) TAKING LIVES

Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 PETER PAN
2 PAY CHECK
3 (DOLBY) PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 (DTS) TAKING LIVES

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320
1 STARSKY & HUTCH
2 I WILL SURVIVE
3 MAN OF FIRE

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) TWISTED
2 CHECK - INN
3 I WILL SURVIVE
4 (DTS) DALAWANG PISNGI

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) HELLBOY
2 BONE SNATCHERS
3 I WILL SURVIVE
4 SCHOOL OF ROCK
5 WHOLE 10 YARD

Olivarez Tri-Cinema (Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 I WILL SURVIVE
2

Olivarez Los Baños tel (049) 249.2558
1 I WILL SURVIVE
2 WHOLE 10 YARD
3 SPARTAN

Mega Center Mall (Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 ANIMAL
2 TAKING LIVES
3 (DTS) PASSION OF CHRIST
4 (DOLBY) PAY CHECK

Cabuyao (Laguna City) tel 520.8914
1 RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 HELLBOY
2 WHOLE 10 YARD
3 MAN OF FIRE
4 STARSKY & HUTCH

Emperor (Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1
2

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DID YOU KNOW...

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ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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Ali 4	VAN HELSING
Ali 5	JERSEY GIRL
Ali 6	CONFESSION... DRAMA QUEEN
Ali 7	HELLBOY

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MAY 14	REWIND PLUS DOBLE REVO DOBLE PREMYO
MAY 16	PBA : PUREFOODS VS. TALK 'N' TEXT
MAY 19	PBA : FEDEX VS. STA. LUCIA
MAY 23	PBA : SAN MIGUEL VS. FEDEX
MAY 26	PBA : STA LUCIA VS SHELL

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ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	[illegible]

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	U-BELT / VENUS
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	LINGGO LANG ANG PAHINGA
B	CLOSED
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	SCHOOL OF ROCK
CINEMA-2	ANIMAL
CINEMA-3	WHOLE 10 YARDS
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	RESERVED
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MAN ON FIRE
CINEMA-6	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-7	CHECK INN
CINEMA-8	SEX EDUCATION
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	VAN HELSING
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	VAN HELSING
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	CONFESSIONS OF DRAMA QUEEN
CINEMA-12	STARSKY & HUTCH
CINEMA-14	HELLBOY
CINEMA-15	I WILL SURVIVE

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	[illegible]
CINEMA-1	ANIMAL
CINEMA-2	TAKING LIVES
CINEMA-4	PASSION OF THE CHRIST

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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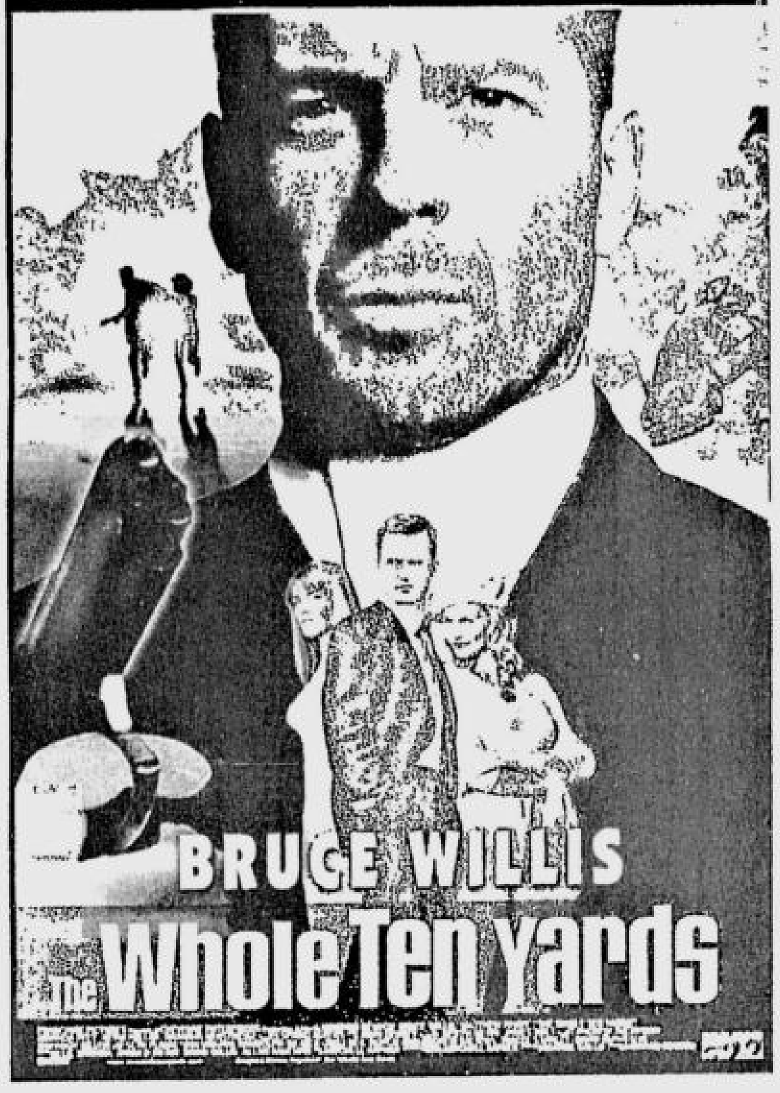

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RESERVED SEATING

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1	THE CONFESSIONS OF TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN 11:35, 1:50, 4:05, 6:20 8:35, 10:50 GP
2	VAN HELSING 12:45, 3:55, 7:05, 10:15 PG-13
3	STARSKY & HUTCH 11:40, 1:50, 4:00 6:10, 8:20, 10:30 PG-13
4	I WILL SURVIVE 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00 PG-13

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VAN HELSING PG13 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30	VAN HELSING PG13 11:30, 2:30, 5:30, 8:30	VAN HELSING PG13 1:30, 4:30, 7.30, 10:30

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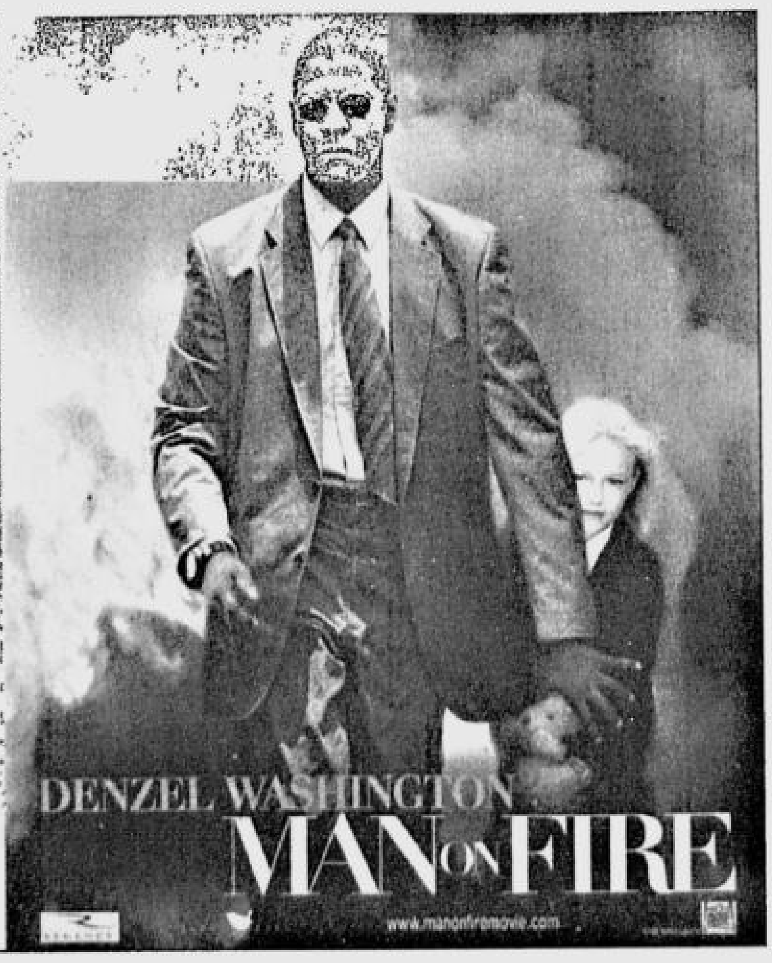

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7 PAYCHECK
8 HELLBOY
9 THE WHOLE TEN YARDS
10 MAN ON FIRE

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6 MAN ON FIRE
7 I WILL SURVIVE

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6 STARSKY AND HUTCH

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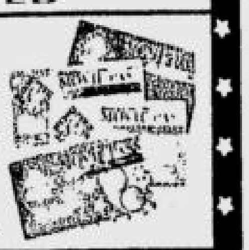

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Masculados: Sing, dance, tease their way to fame

By Remy Umerez
Contributor

THEY don't have the bodies to lust for like the Chippendales, but they can tease...and they try to sing and dance.

Even if all-male group Masculados needs to work more on their biceps and their vocals, they have perfected their moves. As a concept, they even work. They bring to mind the '80s group "Hagibis," a macho version of the gay "Village People."

The group conceived by director Maryo J. de los Reyes and producer Bella Tan of Universal Records, has just released their second album called "Nakaka." But its their movements that make them different.

Masculados trained for months to live up to their name, and two vocal coaches supervised their singing. Geleen Eugenio choreographed their dance moves. Only after Bella Tan thought they were polished enough to face the challenge did she give the group the go signal for their debut album.

The self-titled album produced several hit singles like "Lagot Ka," "Macho Papa," "Sana Mama" and their own anthem Masculados.

Last week, the follow-up CD "Nakaka" was launched at Laffline, with the Masculados treating the audience to their eight new songs.

The title cut "Nakaka..." is a Lito Camo original, the composer behind "Spageti Song" and Otso-Otso," which a group of moralists claim to be full of double meanings and therefore unfit for children to listen and dance to.

What we found more objectionable during the launch was the exchange of repartee disguised as comedy between the stand-up comedienne who impersonated Miriam Defensor Santiago and Wilma Doesn't. No one was amused when Wilma said: *Wala nga'ng ama ang anak ko pero* at least *buhay di tulad ng sa iyo, patay."* This was simply very sickening.

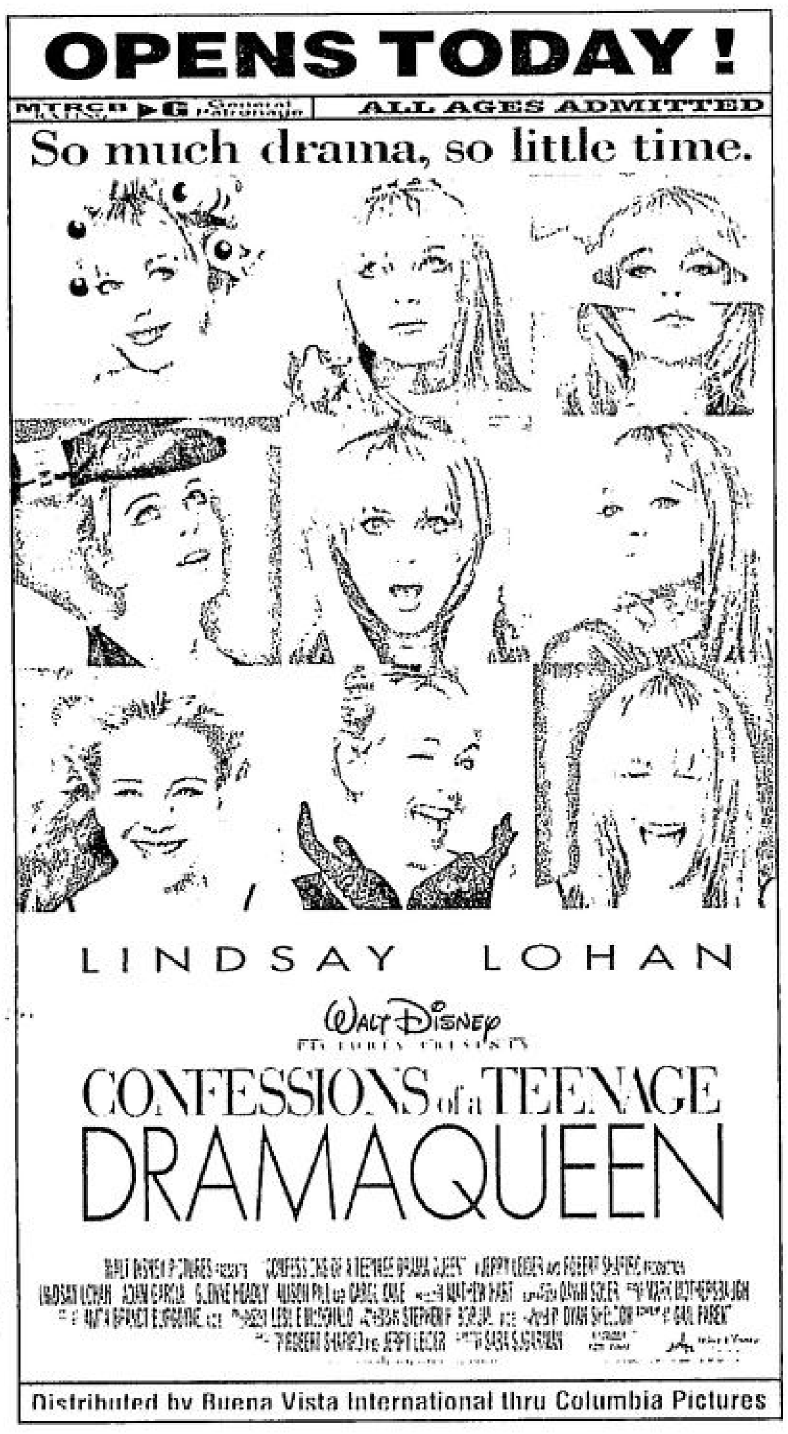
Masculados is composed of professional singers and show biz wannabes. It has two new members, Chard Sevilla and Enrico Mofar. Sevilla is a former singer, guitarist and modeling instructor. Mofar is a graduate of Marine Transportation and a former dance instructor.

The other members are Robin Robel, a B.S. Computer Science graduate; gym instructor Zoltan Amore, who has done some dangerous stunts in some movies; Ailex de Asis; dentist Bok Brillante, who cannot resist the call of show biz; Lexter Lazaro, a graduate of Business Administration and an Associate in Computer Science; and Kiro Amirati, a commercial and ramp model whose favorite line is "love conquers all."

The gym has been second home to the Masculados, who have to stay in shape. They take voice lessons regularly under their new vocal coach, Prof. Anthony Salazar. They also have dance lessons because of their live performances.

For the rest of the year, Masculados will be part of the concert scene, hoping to sing, dance and tease their way to fame.

MASCULADOS is a concept created by film director De los Reyes and record producer Tan.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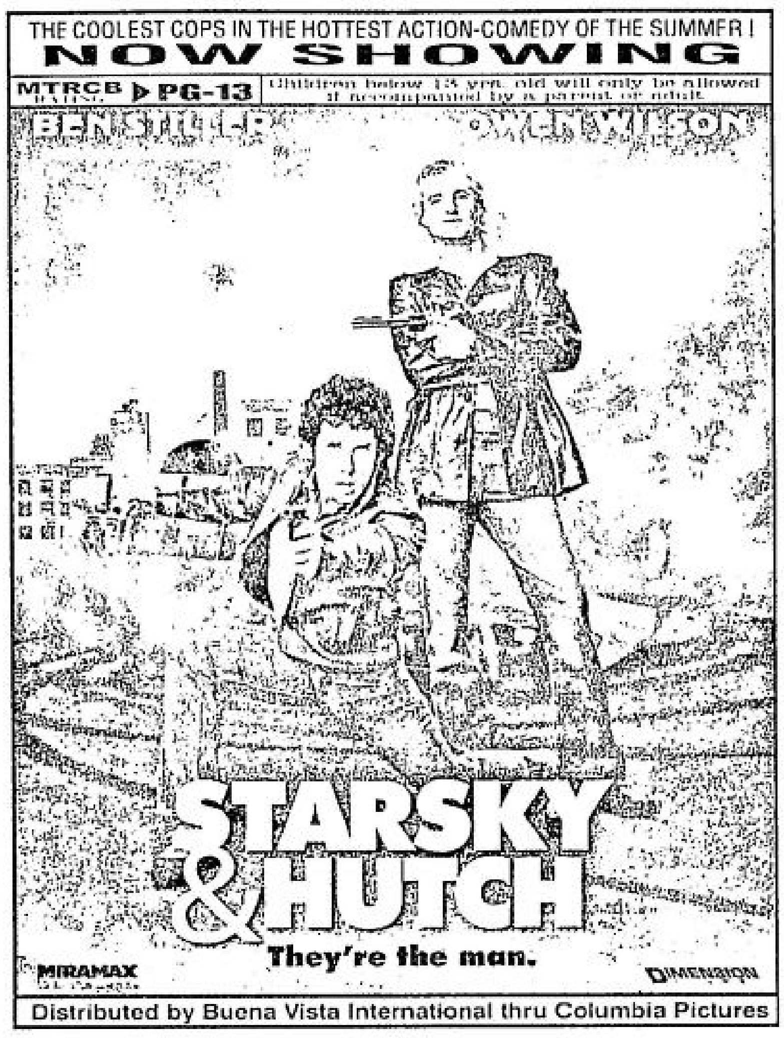
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Mother Lily bats . . .

From page A32

that he will succeed."

She pitched Revilla to the crowd, made up mostly of entertainment writers, as a "good, honest and brave man (that) we need in the Senate."

Citing his achievements as head of the defunct Videogram Regulatory Board, Monteverde said that with Revilla's "dedicated effort, he had succeeded in controlling film piracy."

"He had the courage and vision to help the film industry by running after the pirates despite the many death threats," Monteverde said.

In an earlier interview with INQUIRER Entertainment, Revilla said that if he got elected, he would propose a three-year tax break for the movie industry to help it recover.

During its heyday in the '80s, Regal Films made at least 36 films a year. Today, the company is lucky to produce six movies a year, and make money on four.

Monteverde had noted in a previous interview that the local movie industry does not get government support and that it is one of the most heavily taxed industries in the country.

"Let us do ourselves a favor," said Monteverde in her speech. "Let us vote for Bong Revilla. A vote for Bong Revilla is a vote for honesty, courage, dedication and strong moral leadership in government."

P20-M withdrawal

But Revilla is now facing a credibility issue after senatorial candidate Bong Coo, who is running under presidential candidate Raul Roco's Alyansa ng Pag-Asa, accused him during a press conference on Sunday of offering her P20 million to withdraw from the race.

Coo alleged that Revilla had made the offer on April 27, a day before the Commission on Elections ruled that votes cast for "Bong" would be counted in favor of Revilla. She claimed that presidential adviser on political affairs Gabriel Claudio and a member of the First Family had also tried to convince her to withdraw.

She said she started receiving death threats when she declined.

Ironically, it was Revilla himself who disclosed to INQUIRER Entertainment on April 26 that Coo had offered to withdraw in exchange for P20 million, an F-150 pickup, a Cabinet position and assistance in the resolution of her various court cases. Unfortunately, Revilla had asked this writer to keep the issue off the record, saying "Coo might relent."

She did not. Instead, she called a press conference last Sunday to disclose her allegations against Revilla.

During the Regal press conference on Monday, Revilla chose to downplay the Coo issue.

No cause for worry

"I am telling the truth," he declared. "She approached me first through my sister-in-law, Gigi de la Riva (wife of Revilla's eldest brother, Marlon)."

He said De la Riva had told him Coo's offer to withdraw and her terms.

"About three weeks ago, we met at the Japanese Restaurant in Shangri-la, Makati, and she told me in person her conditions for withdrawing," Revilla said.

Revilla told INQUIRER Entertainment that he refused Coo's offer.

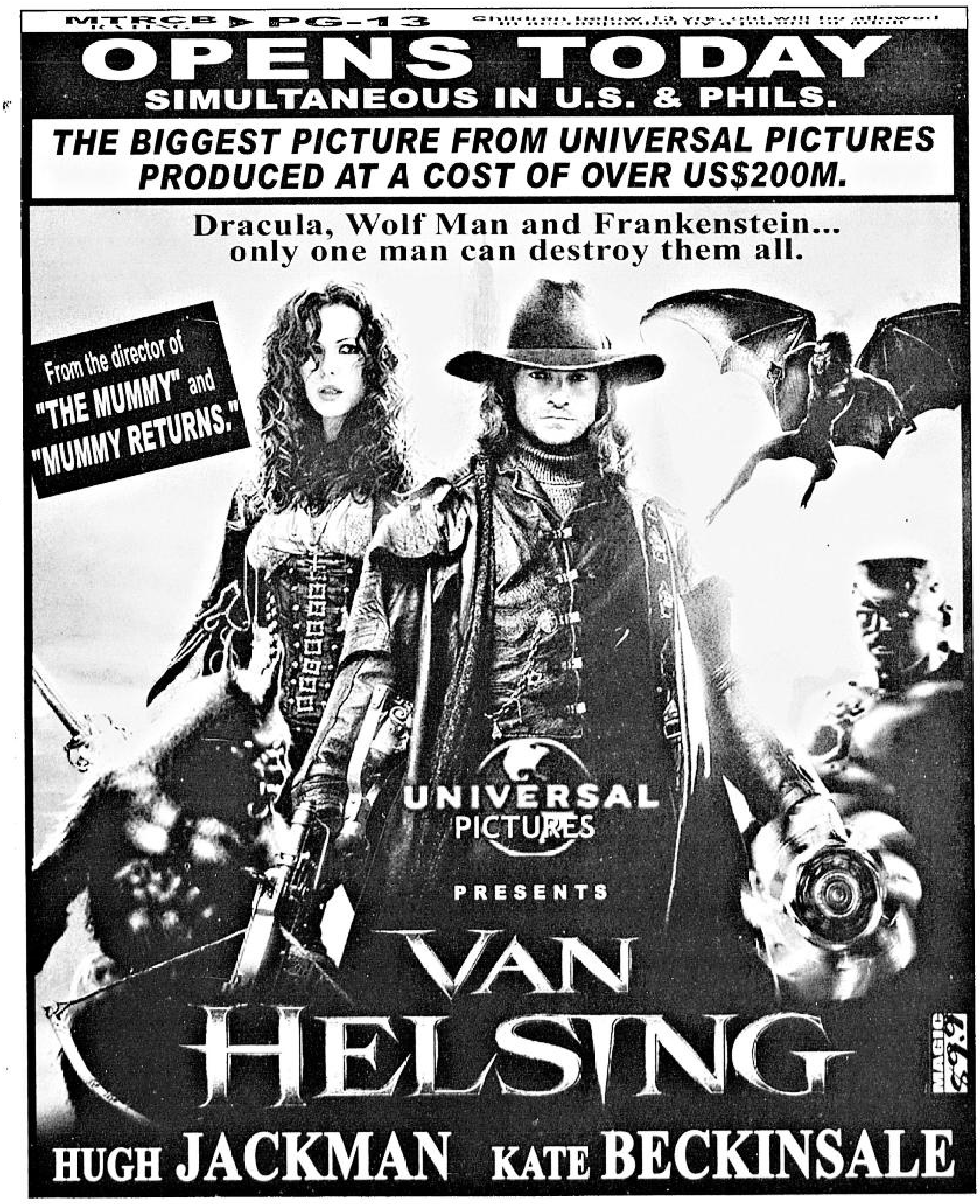
"If I had P20 million, I might as well use that to pay for TV ads," he said.

He claimed he would not worry even if the Comelec had decided that "Bong" votes would be counted in Coo's favor.

"That would only be about 200,000 votes," Revilla said. "There's no need to worry."

Still, Revilla could see something good coming out of the issue.

"At least, people now know that Bong Coo is running for senator," he said.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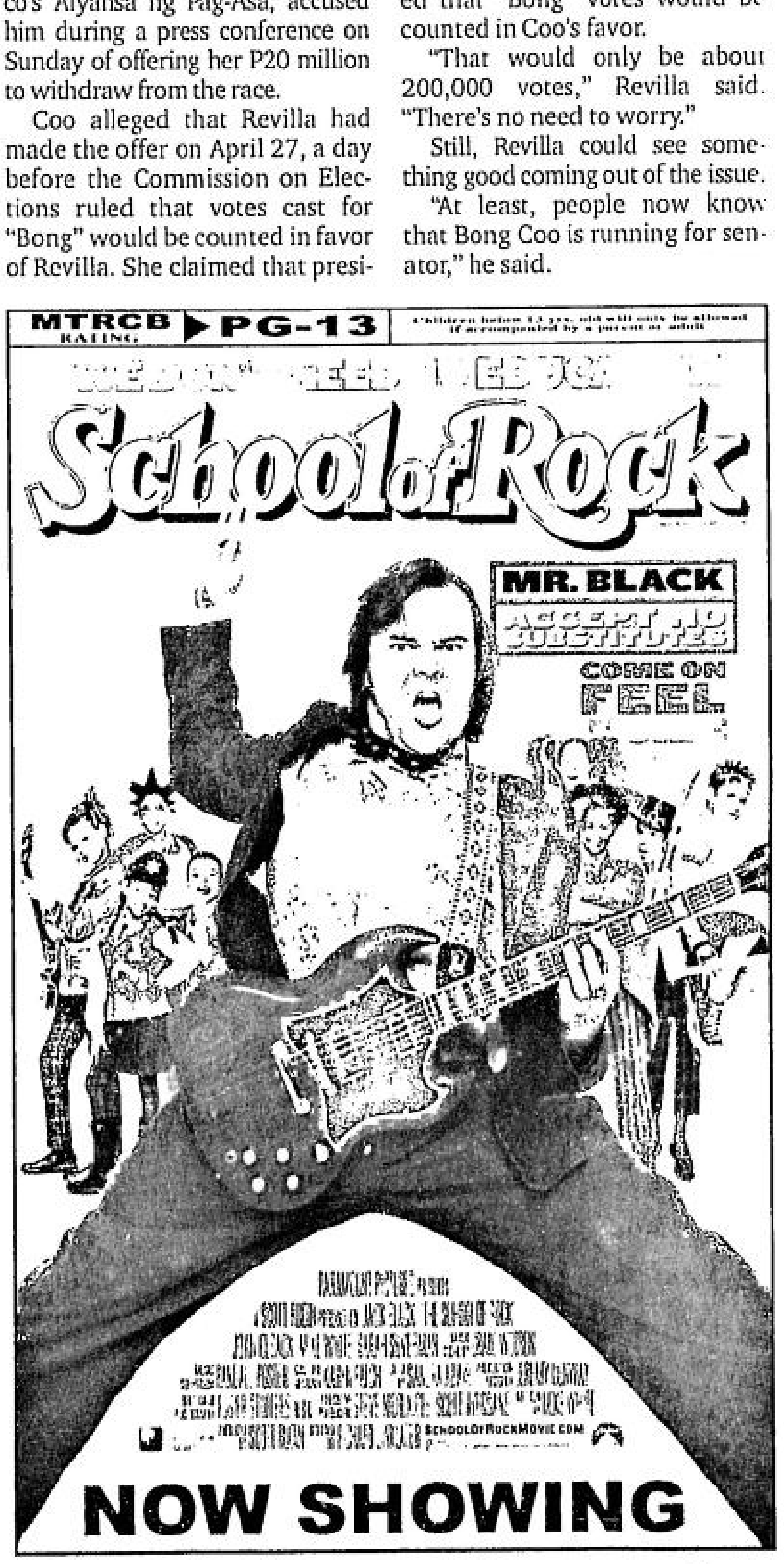
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Seagal ready to do 'anything' for RP

SEGAL in a huddle with former Tourism Secretary Dick Gordon. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

HOLLYWOOD action star Steven Seagal made headlines here Tuesday by giving the thumbs-up for President Macapagal-Arroyo in next Monday's election.

The actor visited the presidential palace to discuss shooting a movie in the Philippines, but ended up rooting for Arroyo—giving her campaign a bit of the star appeal that thus far has been the advantage of her political opponents.

.Arroyo was away on the campaign trail, but Seagal described himself as "a big fan of the president."

"I've never met her, but my impression of her is that she's very straight, sincere, honest, really talented president, and I hope she gets re-elected," newspapers quoted Seagal as saying on Monday.

The statement drew criticism from the opposition, ABS-CBN TV reported.

Celebrities are nothing new to Philippine politics.

Arroyo's rival, Fernando Poe Jr., is a local movie legend, and so is Arroyo's predecessor, former President Joseph Estrada, who was ousted in "people power" protests in January 2001.

Seagal said actors can make good political leaders, citing former US President Ronald Reagan as his example.

"Reagan was a pretty good one, but I think it really depends on the situation," Seagal said.

A frequent visitor to the Philippines, Seagal said he was ready to do "anything" to promote the country as a tourist destination. *AP*

Brightman concert in Manila

SARAH Brightman, the "Pre-eminent Queen of the Crossover World" will finally come to Manila.

She will perform on June 23 at the covered court of the Philippine Sports Commission Multi-Purpose Arena (formerly Ultra).

Dubbed as the "Harem 2004 World Tour," Brightman's concert will highlight the artist's journey from the footlights to her hits.

Brightman gained the moniker "Pre-eminent Queen of the Classical Crossover World" for cutting across various musical genres, from Broadway to pop, rock, opera to alternative world music, with elegant grace.

She is also known as the "Angel of Music" for the stage hits written in her honor by ex-husband Andrew Lloyd Webber.

Brightman is also the soulful voice blending with Jose Carreras in "Amigos Para Siempre" and "Time to Say Goodbye" with Andrea Bocelli, among others.

She was part of the original cast of "Cats" in London Theatre in 1982, played Valencianne in New Sadler's Wells Opera's "The Merry Widow," and won the Grammy nomination for best new classical artist in another one of Webber's classics, "Requiem."

A year later, Brightman re-created the role of Christine in "The Phantom of the Opera."

Her unique "fusion" singles include "Pie Jesu," "All I Ask of You," "Phantom of the Opera," "Time to Say Goodbye," "Dust in the Wind," "Il Mio Cuore Va" (Italian version of "My Heart Will Go On") and "Show Me How to Love," to name a few.

Tickets to Brightman's concert are priced at P10,000, P5,000, P2,500 and P900 at Ticketworld. You may call 897-9999 or send an e-mail to www.ticketworld.com.ph.

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Can You Handle It	*Usher*	**TONE CANUHANDLE**
Take Your Hand	*Usher*	**TONE TAKEHAND**
Fell in Love With a Boy	*Joss Stone*	**TONE FELLINLUV**
The Way You Look Tonight	*Josh Groban*	**TONE WAYULOOK**
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She Will be Loved	*Maroon Five*	**POLY SHEWILL**
Lying From You	*Linkin Park*	**POLY LYING**
A Love to Share	*Rivermaya*	**POLY LUV2SHARE**
Everything	*Fefe Dobson*	**POLY EVERYTHING**
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THX 1 VAN HELSING	1 CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN	1 STARSKY & HUTCH	5 HELLBOY	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE... 1:10, 3:10, 5:10, 7:10, 9:10, 11:10	1 VAN HELSING
2 CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN	2 VAN HELSING	2 CONFESSIONS OF A TEENAGE DRAMA QUEEN	6 VAN HELSING	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 VAN HELSING 2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:40	2 HELLBOY
3 STARSKY & HUTCH	3 STARSKY & HUTCH	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 VAN HELSING 12:00, 2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:40	7 SCHOOL OF ROCK	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 SCHOOL OF ROCK 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:30	3 SCHOOL OF ROCK
4 SCHOOL OF ROCK	4 I WILL SURVIVE	4 MAN ON FIRE		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 STARSKY & HUTCH 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20	4 I WILL SURVIVE
5 VAN HELSING				GUARANTEED SEATS 5 VAN HELSING 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50, 11:30	5 PAYCHECK

GB1 GREENBELT 1

1 I WILL SURVIVE 11:50, 2:00, 4:10, 6:20, 8:30
2 VAN HELSING 11:15, 1:45, 4:25, 7:05, 9:45

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Cinema 1 - 1:30 pm, 4:00, 6:50, 10:00
GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 1 - 10:40 am, 1:20 pm, 4:00, 6:40, 9:20
GLORIETTA 4
Cinema 3 - 12:00 nn, 2:40 pm, 5:20, 8:00, 10:40
Cinema 6 - 11:20 am, 2:00 pm, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
GREENBELT 1
Cinema 2 - 11:05 am, 1:45 pm, 4:25, 7:05, 9:45
GREENBELT 3
Cinema 2 - 2:40 pm, 5:20, 8:00, 10:40
Cinema 5 - 12:50 pm, 3:30, 6:10, 8:50, 11:30

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Editor Louie C. Camino

Mother Lily bats for Bong

'Let us do ourselves a favor. Let us vote for Revilla'

REGAL matriarch Monteverde banks on Revilla to do the right thing in the Senate.

By Nini Valera

FOR the first time, Regal Films matriarch Lily Monteverde, who has kept her political choices close to her chest, has publicly endorsed a candidate, even delivering an impassioned speech written by an award-winning screenwriter.

Monteverde had earlier hosted press conferences for vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda and senatorial candidate Lito Lapid, but she had opted to stay in the background then. Monday night, when it was senatorial candidate Bong Revilla's turn to be feted at the film producer's Imperial Palace Hotel in Quezon City, Monteverde made it very clear who she was doing it for.

"Many of you here know that I seldom make speeches," Monteverde began, reading from a speech written by Roy Iglesias. "The only time I can be convinced to speak before a crowd is when there is an important reason to do so . . . The important reason is my *anak* (son), Bong Revilla."

She described Revilla as "a sweet and thoughtful man."

"I remember once, on my birthday, he surprised me by sending me 1,000 roses," she said. "At my age, I must admit, *kinilig ako*.

"As a film producer for more than 40 years, I have worked with different types of people.

"By instinct, I can tell whether a person has what it takes to face difficult challenges. By instinct, I can tell if a person will succeed or fail. By instinct, I can tell whether a person is honest or not. With Bong Revilla, I can say with certainty that he is honest and reliable. I can say with certainty that he will face the difficult challenges of public service with moral strength. And I can say with certainty

MOTHER/ A30

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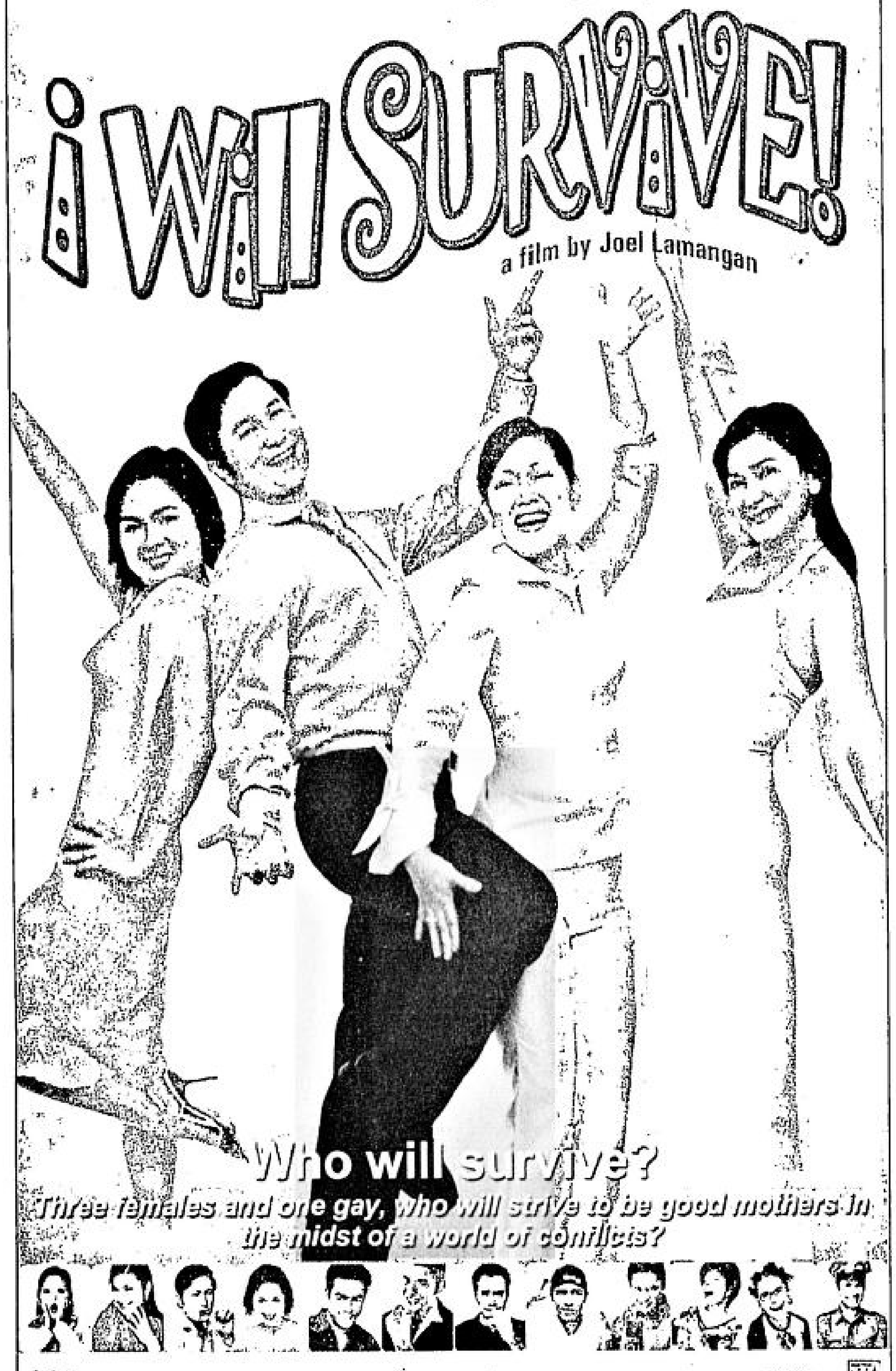
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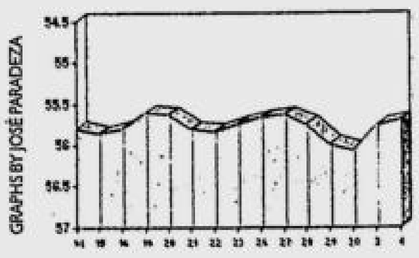

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P55.71 = $1

As of 5 p.m., May 4, 2004

¥110.44 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 30, 2004

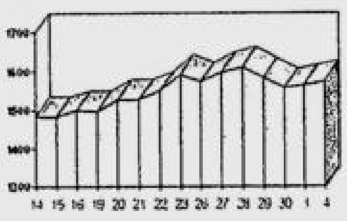
GOLD: $387.40-387.90

per ounce Hong Kong, May 4, 2004

May 4, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.837731	1.000000	55.8470
Japan	Yen	0.007597	0.009069	0.5065
United Kingdom	Pound	1.483790	1.771200	98.9162
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107408	0.128213	7.1603
Switzerland	Franc	0.643518	0.768167	42.8998
Canada	Dollar	0.609747	0.727855	40.6485
Singapore	Dollar	0.491569	0.586786	32.7702
Australia	Dollar	0.603249	0.720098	40.2153
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.222217	2.652661	148.1432
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.223389	0.266660	14.8922
Brunei	Dollar	0.490131	0.585069	32.6743
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000096	0.000115	0.0064
Thailand	Baht	0.020969	0.025031	1.3979
UAE	Dirham	0.228084	0.272264	15.2051
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.193700	66.6646
Argentina	Peso	0.294458	0.351494	19.6299
Brazil	Real	0.283209	0.338066	18.8800
Denmark	Kroner	0.134370	0.160398	8.9577
India	Rupee	0.018707	0.022331	1.2471
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220485	0.263193	14.6985
Mexico	New Peso	0.073069	0.087222	4.8711
New Zealand	Dollar	0.524598	0.626213	34.9721
Norway	Kroner	0.121419	0.144938	8.0944
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014625	0.017458	0.9750
South Africa	Rand	0.120385	0.143703	8.0254
Korea	Won	0.000715	0.000854	0.0477
Sweden	Kroner	0.109283	0.130451	7.2853
Syria	Pound	0.016203	0.019342	1.0802
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025248	0.030139	1.6832
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000437	0.000522	0.0292

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 0.72% higher



(See stock market report on Page B4)

SHARE prices closed 0.72 percent higher yesterday, led by market leader Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. after strong first-quarter results and export figures, dealers said.

They said the positive export figures for March and Wall Street's gains overnight also boosted interest in select blue chips despite caution due to the approaching May 10 presidential elections.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 11.18 points to 1,573.83 after trading between 1,564.74 and 1,583.69.

Losers beat gainers 27 to 20, with 48 stocks unchanged.

Volume was 210.5 million shares worth P674.2 million after 251.8 million shares worth P538.2 million on Monday.

Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Securities said he thought "PLDT's rally early in the session was overdone but it was PLDT that gave the market strong support even as investors are getting more cautious ahead of Monday's elections."

AFP

By Clarissa S. Batino

TELECOM giants Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Globe Telecom Inc. yesterday announced hefty first-quarter net profits of P5.24 billion and P3.1 billion as their cellular operations continued to rake in revenues from more than 25 million Filipinos who have gone wireless.

Dominant carrier PLDT more than doubled its net profit in the first quarter from about P2.48 billion a year ago while Globe increased net earnings by about 52 percent from P2 billion in the first three months of 2003.

PLDT's consolidated revenues expanded by 19 percent to P27.09 billion, of which P14.7 billion came from dominant wireless subsidiary Smart Communications Inc. Globe's revenues stood at P12.8 billion in the first quarter, up 16 percent.

Some analysts suspected that strong first-quarter results were partly driven by the election fever.

But while the May 10 national elections may have helped increase volume of text messaging and calls since the start of the year, telecom executives said that poll-related activities done through mobile phones would have "no material effect on revenues."

PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan said the company was on track with the forecast of generating P18 billion in net income this year on the back of increasing wireless subscriber take-up, declining overhead due to earlier job cuts, and enhancing fixed-line operations.

"We shall restore dividends to common shareholders by the first quarter of 2005. It would start small but we would increase it and align it with regional telcos as our debt level declines and more cash is freed," said PLDT president Napoleon Nazareno, concurrent president of Smart, during yesterday's media briefing.

By the end of the month, Smart said it would remit to PLDT P11.3 billion or 70 percent of its P16.1-billion net income last year. PLDT will use the money to settle $160 million in maturing obligations in the second quarter.

Smart posted a net income of P5.15 billion in the first quarter, or nearly double the P2.8 billion a year ago. PLDT's fixed-line business managed to register net earnings of P217 million.

Smart and Globe, both accounting for 98 percent of the lucrative mobile phone market, credited a sustained increase in subscriber base for their robust performances in the first three months.

We are pleased with our financial performance in the first quarter. We continue to be optimistic over the potential of the wireless market in the Philippines and are well poised to take advantage of growth opportunities," said Globe president Gerardo Ablaza Jr.

PLDT/B6

JPMorgan upgrades RP debt rating

AMERICAN investment bank JPMorgan upgraded Philippine debt to marketweight from underweight yesterday after opinion polls showed President Macapagal Arroyo gaining a lead over her rivals ahead of May 10 elections.

JPMorgan raised the rating in its benchmark regional bond portfolio.

"Political uncertainty remains high in the run-up to the May 10 elections but recent polls show incumbent President Macapagal Arroyo with a 4.5-percent lead over Fernando Poe Jr.," JPMorgan said in a report released yesterday in Hong Kong.

Fernando Poe Jr. is Macapagal's closest rival in the elections.

Although Macapagal's economic record has been mixed since she took over the presidency in January 2001, following the ousting of Joseph Estrada in a popular revolt, she is viewed as more market-friendly than other candidates.

Philippine sovereign bond spreads have tightened massively in the past month on growing prospects of Arroyo winning.

"Recent market moves have echoed the poll results, pricing in what is considered a more desirable election outcome," JPMorgan said.

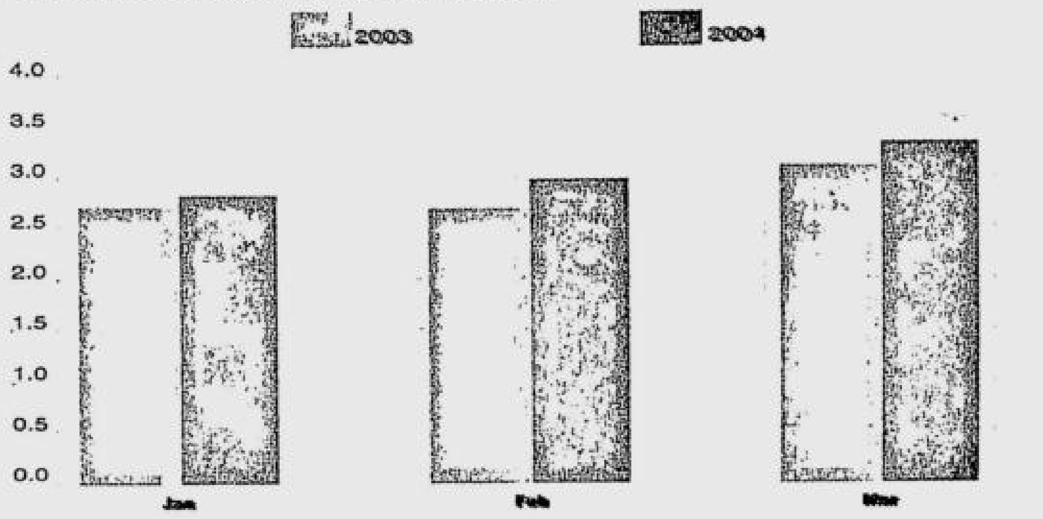
JPMorgan said Philippine bond spreads could possibly rally by another 15 to 20 basis points on a Macapagal victory in next week's polls.

On the local front, the cost of the government's two-year borrowing stood at 9.375 percent during yesterday's auction, a level which the treasury department said was an indication of market calmness on news that

JP/B3

TOTAL EXPORTS

January to March 2003 and 2004, in billion us dollars



Exports jump 7.1% in March

PHILIPPINE merchandise exports in March rose 7.1 percent from a year earlier to $3.35 billion, the government announced yesterday.

This brought total exports for the first three months of 2004 to $9.2 billion, a 6.3-percent increase over the same period in 2003, the National Statistics Office said.

Export growth in March sustained the 7.5-percent gain posted in February and showed that demand for electronic products—the country's main export—remained robust, analysts said.

Electronic products accounted for 67 percent of total exports in March, up 9.8 percent from a year earlier to $2.24 billion, the NSO said.

Apparel and clothing accessories remained the second largest export with 5.4 percent of the total but were down 6.3 percent in March to $179 million.

Chee Seng Wong, regional economist of DBS Bank, said the slightly lower export growth in March, compared to February, was not really a slowdown.

"I think the momentum was maintained as Philippine electronics exports continued to benefit from higher global demand despite very strong competition with its neighbors," Wong said.

At the same time, Wong said the government's target of 10-percent growth in exports for 2004 seemed over optimistic, putting the outcome more likely at 6 to 7 percent.

Japan was the largest market for Philippine exports in March, taking 20.2 percent of the total, followed by the United States with 16.8 percent and the Netherlands at 11.7 percent.

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Citigroup raises direct investment in RP by ₱3B

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

DESPITE election and market jitters, New York-based financial services conglomerate Citigroup said it has hiked its capital investment in the Philippines by close to P3 billion.

In a statement, the bank said the additional infusion will bring Citigroup's total equity investment in the country to roughly P7.6 billion, and its total capital to P38 billion.

Citigroup said it has advised the BSP of its additional investment.

The BSP, on the other hand, approved the planned increase in equity investment in principle.

Citigroup Country Officer James F. Hunt said "the added capitalization is proof of Citigroup's long-term commitment to doing business in the Philippines."

"Clearly, the Philippines is an important market for us and continues to offer tremendous growth opportunities," he said.

"We are looking to do more deals that will help fast track the development of the local capital market. We will take advantage of the vast resources of Citigroup to bring the most innovative products and solutions to our clients," he said.

"And, with the strength of our systems and quality of our people, operationally, we are poised to do more business process outsourcing activities that can be done for our other branches within the region. This infusion underscores Citigroup's commitment to the Philippines for generations to come," he added.

Citigroup is represented in the Philippines by its global corporate and investment bank, its global consumer group that manages its credit card business,' the Citigroup private bank and Citigroup global markets.

Citigroup provides financing, advisory and banking products as well as services to government, the utility and energy sectors, local corporates and multinational corporations, other financial institutions and individuals.

Over the last decade, Citigroup has located three of its Regional Offices in the Philippines—Citigroup Business Services Asia, Citibank Infrastructure and Techonology Center and the Asia Pacific Banking Institute.

Acknowledging Citigroup's additional investment, Secretary of Trade & Industry Cesar Purisima said: "Citigroup's additional investment certainly augurs well for the country especially in a critical period like this."

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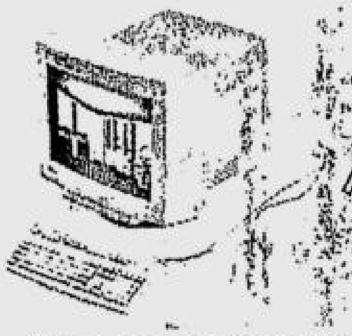

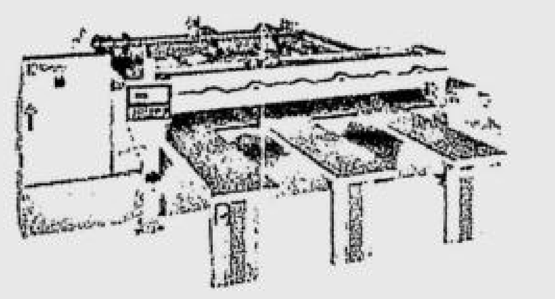

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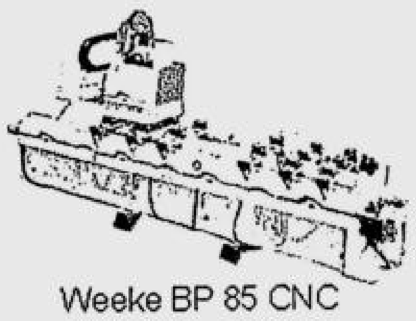

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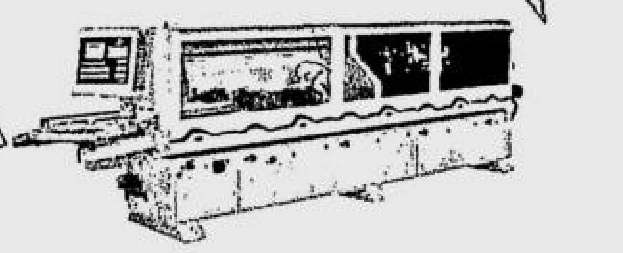

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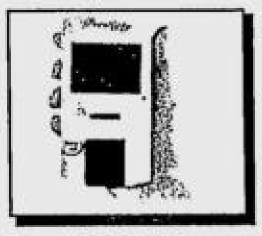

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Transco to tap $100-M fund

By Abigail L. Ho

THE STATE-RUN National Transmission Corp. might tap an existing $100-million credit line from Credit Lyonnais to fund an undersea cable interconnection project.

"The $100-million Credit Lyonnais standby credit can be tapped for the SISID project. The first phase doesn't cost that much anyway, just roughly $2.5 million," the source said.

Transco recently started work on the Panay-Boracay phase of its Small Island Submarine Interconnection Development (SISID) project by inspecting the proposed route that the underwater cable lines will take.

Divers from Transco's environmental management department, including Transco president and chief executive Alan Ortiz, went underwater over the weekend to inspect the proposed site as well as check on existing cables that were installed in the early 1990s.

Ortiz said in a statement that this was an important part of the preparations for the SISID project as it would ensure that the cables would not be placed in areas with coral reefs.

Transco plans to install 1.6 circuit kilometers of 138-kilovolt submarine cable lines.

The lines will connect the state firm's Caticlan substation with another one that will be built on Boracay island.

This phase will be funded by internally generated cash and is targeted for completion by March 2005.

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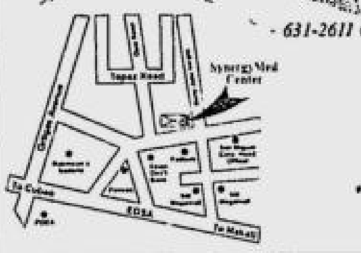

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CITYSTATE SAVINGS BANK

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

The Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Citystate Savings Bank, Inc. will be held at the 20th Floor Citystate Centre Building, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City on May 25, 2004 at 2:00 P.M. to take up the following matters:

AGENDA

I. Calling of Meeting to Order
II. Certification of Notice
III. Determination and Declaration of Quorum
IV. Approval of the Minutes of the Stockholders Meeting held on April 29, 2003
V. Consideration of the President's Report on the Results of the Bank's Operations for the Year Ended 31 December 2003 (Annual Reports and Financial Statements of the Bank)
VI. Confirmation/Ratification of the Acts of Officers, Management, the Executive Committee, and the Board of Directors
VII. Election of Members of the Board of Directors
VIII. Appointment of External Auditor and Fixing of Remuneration
IX. Such other business as may properly come before the meeting
X. Adjournment

The record date for the determination of the stockholders entitled to notice of, and to vote at, said meeting is fixed at the close of business hours on 16 April 2004.

If it will be inconvenient for you to attend the meeting, you may at your option, appoint another person to represent you thereat by means of proxy, which should be submitted to the Office of the Corporate Secretary of CSBI, 2nd Floor, Citystate Centre Building, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City not later than 5:00 P.M. of May 18, 2004.

Any stockholder may examine the proxies at the same office on May 20, 2004 beginning at 9:00 A.M until 5:00 P.M.

When signing as attorney -in-fact, executor, administrator, guardian, or any other representative's capacity, please give full title and file papers showing your authority.

Please be guided accordingly.

JOAQUIN T. VENUS, JR.
Corporate Secretary

Phinma goes to school

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE NEXT time Ramon del Rosario Jr. delivers his usual proselytizing speech, the Manindigan founder will be assured of a captive and, more important, paying audience.

The Phinma/Bacnotan Consolidated Group where Del Rosario is president has bought majority control of Araullo University, one of the leading private schools of Cabanatuan City and Nueva Ecija province.

The group has already acquired 69 percent of Araullo from the founding Esteban-Fabros families for P116 million, said Del Rosario. He added that the group is in the process of contacting the scattered minority shareholders to pursue the buyout plan.

The acquisition marks a paradigm shift for the Phinma/Bacnotan Consolidated Group from a bricks-and-mortar conglomerate to the unfamiliar but "quite exciting and ennobling" education business.

Named after the first Filipino Court of First Instance judge from Nueva Ecija who later rose to become Chief Justice, Araullo started as a law school in 1950 with 23 students. It was granted university status in 1984.

From a peak of 13,000 students, Araullo's enrollment has dwindled to 6,000 after a fire a few years ago razed one of the buildings on the 3.5-hectare campus. The gutted structure has since remained unreconstructed due to lack of capital.

Del Rosario, a finance secretary during the Ramos years, is optimistic that with new funds and stronger, more focused management, Araullo's fortunes could be turned around.

To this end, Phinma/Bacnotan Consolidated last week installed AIM professor Chito Salazar as university president. He will now be based on the Cabanatuan campus.

The new owners also plan to introduce the in-demand IT and nursing courses, as well as strengthen the school's core education, engineering and commerce departments.

Araullo also has a criminology department, where soldiers from the nearby Fort Magsaysay, from which then Col. Gringo Honasan recruited his infantry troops for one of his coup attempts, and aspiring policemen could attend its afternoon/night classes.

Former Eat Bulaga! host and now Sen. Tito Sotto once served the school board, LRTA Administrator Pacifico Fajardo worked his way to a law degree from the same school, and JV Bautista, the Sanlakas congressman who sports a Stalinist goatee to mask his landlord origins, was until recently teaching in the law department.

Delgados dial up Saipan

AFTER two years in the federal gridlock, the Delgados of Islacom have finally received regulatory approval from the Saipan government to acquire the island's landline/cellphone provider, Micronesian Telecommunications Co.

The Delgados' Pacific Telecom now has until June 30 to close the financial audit with Verizon, Micronesian Telecom's parent, before the actual takeover.

According to the grapevine, the Delgados paid $60 million for the Saipan telecom firm and assumed its debts.

Micronesian Telecom posted about $40 million in 2003 revenues. Among the conditions for the purchase is that the Philippine owners would keep its 150 employees.

To celebrate the acquisition, the 32-year-old Pacific Telecom CEO, Jose Ricardo Delgado, yesterday flew to New York to attend, apparently to sharpen his financial skills notwithstanding an Ivy League MBA degree, a three-week business course in Columbia University.

GMA's governor-in-waiting

GOLF and litigation expenses are an expensive combination.

Former Far East Bank president, now BPI director, Octavio Victor Espiritu last month sold P7,797,200 worth of Bank of the Philippine Islands shares. Not to worry, OV's remaining BPI stock hoard stands at a healthy 728,303 shares, more than P35 million.

According to Manila Golf Club's S.Cuttle Butt, OV needs some cash not only for the green and caddy fees, but also to pay for the litigation expenses for the unfortunate Yuletide 2002 incident, when fellow Far East Banker Vicente Panlilio's nose met OV's fist.

And, if we are to believe the legal grapevine, the two former steadfast buddies are now in a forgive-and-forget mode and are about to reach an amicable settlement.

Incidentally, OV's recent election to the board of San Miguel Corp. as a Malacañang nominee only strengthened the speculation that the nattily-dressed banker is GMA's choice—should the Mighty Mite make it to Malacañang anew—to succeed Rafael Buenaventura in the Bangko Sentral.

Heard through the grapevine

THE Yuchengcos are going all out for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Not content with sisters Susan and Yvonne volunteering as election watchdogs for the administration party, the family will host New York-based billionaire Loida Nicolas-Lewis and GMA daughter-in-law Kakai Arroyo as they rally the troops and deliver rah-rah talk at the spanking RCBC Hall tomorrow afternoon.

(E-mail: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

JPMorgan . . .

From page B1

Ms Macapagal had a strong chance of getting a fresh six-year term.

Although the new two-year treasury bond rate was 62.5 basis points higher than the 8.75 percent recorded during its previous auction in October last year, it was lower than the 10- to 11-percent levels sought by the market in the past two months that led to a series of rejections of bids for long-term government securities by the treasury's auction committee.

The market showed strong appetite for the two-year government debt paper, with tenders reaching P8.705 billion compared with the government's offering of only P4 billion. The government accepted P4 billion worth of bids

Michelle V. Remo, Reuters

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300,000 - 499,999	5.50	5.75	5.75	6.00	7.00
500,000 - 999,999	6.00	6.25	6.50	6.50	8.00
1,000,000 - 4,999,999	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75	8.00
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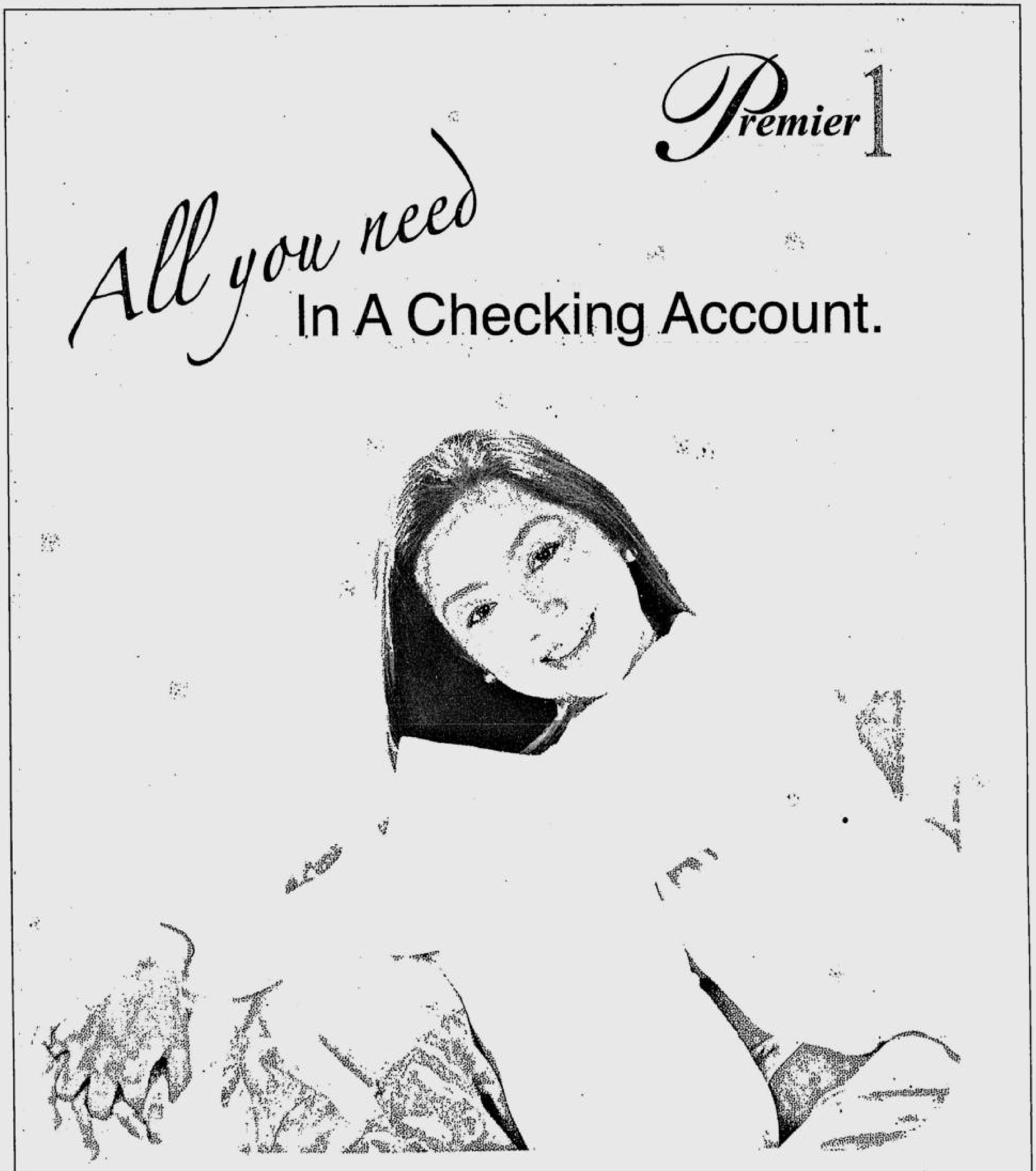

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PCCI bucks zero-interest feature of Meralco refund

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINE Chamber of Commerce and Industry bucked Manila Electric Co.'s proposal to refund some of its big customers by way of zero coupon refund notes, suggesting that the debt paper to be issued should be interest-bearing in nature.

PCCI executive vice president Donald Dee said in an interview that the group was not entirely against the issuance of the refund notes, except that the notes' zero-interest nature did not sit well with the affected firms.

"We're not objecting to their proposed 63 months of payment (using the debt paper for firms under) group 4B. But the zero coupon notes, that can't be. We should be getting interest," he told reporters.

For the rate, he said Meralco could use anything from the prevailing savings deposit to money market to treasury bill rates.

"But we know this will be subject to a lot of discussions, maybe even (reach) the courts. Of course, we don't want it to reach that level, but we know that this will be subject to a lot of discussions," he said.

Meralco is firming up a proposal on how it will conduct the costliest phase of its Supreme Court-mandated, P30-billion refund for income tax charges passed on to customers from February 1994 to April 2003.

Its most feasible option right now, based on an internal study conducted by its finance department, was the issuance of zero coupon bonds called refund notes.

The firm plans to employ a two-tranche refund scheme for its commercial and industrial customers, which represent 2 percent of its total customer base.

Smaller industrial and commercial users will have their refund credited to future bills, while other large customers, after exceeding a specific volume usage cut-off, will have a choice of whether to have their refund credited to future bills or get refund notes.

But the PCCI had earlier proposed that instead of issuing debt paper, Meralco should just convert some of the P18.6 billion in refund due its large customers into equity through common shares.

"What we want is an equity conversion up to a maximum amount of P16 billion," Dee said.

However, Meralco refund task force project manager Cheri Torres said in an earlier interview that it would be "costly and tedious" to do an equity conversion for part of the amount involved in the fourth and last phase of the whole refund process.

"A barrier we see in the equity conversion proposal is the fact that all shareholders will have to be consulted before it can be done," she said.

Finance seeks review of auto tax perks plan

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is seeking a review of the move granting more incentives to the automotive industry, saying it should not result in revenue losses for the already cash-starved government.

Finance Undersecretary Grace Tan said in a briefing the finance department had asked the Board of Investments to present a cost-benefit analysis (in terms of revenue) of the move to extend the coverage of the government's automotive export incentive program.

The Tariff and Related Matters (TRM) committee earlier approved the proposal of the Department of Trade and Industry to expand the coverage of EO 244, which provides for duty privileges, among other incentives, to qualified car exporters to boost the automotive industry. The proposal has been submitted to Malacañang for approval.

The amendments to EO 244 will extend the coverage of the incentives to the following: developmental vehicles, low-volume niche vehicles, and high-value, low-volume type of completely built-up units.

The DTI earlier said the move to extend the coverage of the automotive export incentive program would create more employment in the car industry, and would help boost the government's initiative of promoting the Philippines as a car-manufacturing hub in Asia.

Tan, however, said the granting of more incentives to the automotive industry should not adversely affect the government's revenue-generation efforts. She said that while the finance department supported the move to boost the car industry, any government assistance to the private sector should be revenue-neutral.

"Our policy has always been to support the granting of incentives to the private sector so long as the foregone taxes or duties will be compensated by other revenues arising from more investments," Tan said.

The finance official said she had asked Board of Investments Director Elmer Hernandez to submit to the DOF a computation of the possible revenue losses and gain that would result from the expansion of the incentives to the automotive industry.

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Settlement seen in tariff row

RP gov't to impose zero duty on some Singapore products

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has drawn up a draft executive order that would grant zero tariff on selected imports from Singapore—a move that may finally put an end to the petrochemical tariff dispute between Singapore and the Philippines.

Under the draft executive order, which was submitted for approval to members of the Tariff and Related Matters Committee and the Department of Finance, the selected imports will enjoy duty-free privilege as a form of compensation by the Philippine government to Singapore.

The products include lubricating oil and polymers, such as polyisobutylene in powder, granules, paste and other forms.

The need for the Philippines to compensate Singapore arose from the failure of the former to follow an earlier tariff-reduction agreement.

According to the schedule under the common effective preferential treatment scheme (CEPT) of the Asean Free Trade Agreement, tariffs on petrochemical products should be lowered to 5 percent beginning 2003.

The Philippines, however, set its tariffs on petrochemical products last year at 7 to 10 percent, with the aim of protecting the country's petrochemical industry.

The Philippines' decision not to reduce petrochemical tariffs as agreed upon by members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) prompted Singapore, a major petrochemical exporter, to lodge a protest against the Philippine government last year.

To settle the row between the two countries, their representatives met in December and decided that the Philippines would have to impose zero duties on selected imports from Singapore.

They agreed that the products to receive zero tariff should either be those that are not produced in the Philippines or those that do not have much competition here to avoid hurting a local industry.

The draft executive order, which will be submitted to Malacañang for the President's approval, also states that the zero tariff will only be granted on a temporary basis. The draft executive order said the duty-free privilege of the Singapore products would be good only until such time the government decides that the Philippines has already completed its compensation to Singapore.

The DTI would be the agency to determine whether the Philippine government has already completed its compensation to Singapore, but the decision may be based on the two countries' agreement made during the Asean Economic Ministers Meeting held in Cambodia last September.

During the meeting, the Philippines and Singapore agreed that the former will compensate the latter with a $4 million to $5 million worth of tariff reductions. The lowering of tariffs should take effect within a three-year period.

The draft EO should be signed soon to meet the Philippine government's commitment to implement the tariff reduction in the first half of this year.

NHMFC to raise stake in loan body

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

STATE-RUN housing arm National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. (NHMFC) is willing to hike its stake in a proposed "special purpose entity" that will manage and restructure the government's P14 billion in soured housing loans.

Sources told the INQUIRER that NHMFC might increase its stake to 49 percent from the original 25 percent in the SPE to share in the risk of managing the bad loans. On the other hand, the interest of the foreign investor who will win in the bidding for the bad loans will be reduced from 75 percent to 51 percent.

The bidding for the loans was originally scheduled to take place yesterday but the NHMFC decided to postpone it to May 18 to give way to the preparation of some documents.

Sources said four foreign investors were pre-qualified to bid for the loan portfolio.

Among the foreign investment banks that examined the housing agency's loan books were Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, Lone Star and Lehman Brothers, sources earlier said.

Of the P13.8 billion worth of delinquent loans for sale, about 85 percent are held by the private sector pension fund Social Security System and 15 percent by the Home Development Mutual Fund, more popularly known as the Pag-Ibig Fund.

The winning bidder and NHMFC will form a special purpose entity that will manage the loans. This entity will not be availing itself of the tax perks provided by the special purpose vehicle (SPV) law.

RP agencies, exporters all set for new port security system

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A GROUP of exporters yesterday welcomed the designation of the Department of Transportation and Communication as the sole agency responsible for the implementation of new international port security measures.

The new International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, regulating all vessels over 500 gross weight tons, will take effect on July 1.

According to members of the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. (Philexport), Executive Order No. 311—which President Macapagal-Arroyo signed on April 26—was the "missing link" that ensured the timely implementation of the ISPS Code.

The Code contains detailed security requirements for governments, port authorities and shipping companies. It also contains guidelines on how to meet such requirements.

According to Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima, several agencies are now preparing for the code's implementation, including the departments of trade and industry and of transportation and communication, the Maritime Industry Authority, Philippine Ports Authority, Export Development Council, Philippine Shippers Bureau, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Philexport and Cebu Ports Authority.

Ports that are not ISPS Code-compliant may face sanctions, while shipments from that port may face strict evaluation and refused entry in all international ports, Purisima said.

DTI officials yesterday said that they are closely working with their counterparts in the DOTC officials as well as private stakeholders in finalizing the draft guidelines for the ISPS Code, which would lay out specific measures to be followed by ships and ports.

The guidelines are expected to be issued by the DOTC in the form of a department order.

Earlier, the PCCI warned that countries which do not comply with the Code might see lesser traffic of ISPS-compliant vessels on their ports.

With a majority of the 165 (signatories) being Philippine trading partners, non-compliance could result to negative effects on imports and exports, the exporters said.

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From page B1

From January to March, Smart said it added, together with Pilipino Telephone Corp.'s Talk N' Text, 1.4 million new subscribers to bring the group's mobile phone clients to about 14.4 million as of end-March from 12.9 million in end-2003.

But Globe said it added only a modest 277,197 to its subscriber base after weeding out inactive ones from the list, including those who fled to the competitor. Globe said subscribers stood at 9.1 million as of end-March from 8.9 million by the end of last year.

This churn level reflects the subscribers who left the Globe network from June to October last year when the competitive over-the-air reload service was unchallenged," Globe said in a statement.

The Ayala-owned telecom firm said most of the churned subscribers were no longer generating revenues anyway.

Globe said its churn rate had dropped substantially after it introduced in November Autoload Max, an over-the-air reloading system similar to its competitor's Smart Load. Globe said the credit-sharing system called Share-A-Load launched in January also helped.

Nazareno said Smart and Talk N' Text had been transacting more than 2 million of these over-the-air reloads daily.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 4, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.1	42,000
Bank of The Phil. Islands	42	42	41	41	719,300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39	39	39	39	800
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.52	0.53	0.52	0.53	990,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25	24.75	25	595,700
Philippine National Bank	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	7,000
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	1,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12	12	12	12	16,500
Security Bank Corp.	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	4,600
Union Bank of the Phil.	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	13,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2000	2000	2000	2000	20
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1470	1475	1470	1470	1,620
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	680,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	875	875	860	865	44,870
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	1,500,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.038	0.037	0.038	800,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.6	1.66	1.56	1.64	30,319,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1100	1145	1090	1110	209,130
Ivantage Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	19,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.25	19.5	19.25	19.25	145,600
Manila Electric Co. B	30	30.5	30	30.5	1,774,200
Petron Corp.	3.2	3.3	3.15	3.25	5,866,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.1	2.1	97,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	60,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.36	1.36	586,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3	3.1	3	3.1	72,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	90,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Sanitary Wares Mfg. Corp.	0.165	0.18	0.165	0.18	550,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.62	1.62	1,903,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28	29	28	29	10,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	21	21.25	20.75	20.75	1,057,100
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4	4	4	4	11,000
RFM Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	100,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	140,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59.5	60	59	60	453,500
San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	74.5	74	74.5	29,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	350,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	7,549,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3	3	3	3	184,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	20,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	29,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.56	0.57	0.56	0.57	7,090,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	3,000,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.024	1,700,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	100,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	27.5	28.5	27.5	28.5	1,521,400
Global Equities Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	1,700,000
Ionics Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.22	1.22	182,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	12,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.16	1.18	1.16	1.16	2,039,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	3,250,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	730,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	200,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	100,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	15	15	15	15	3,300
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	10,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.06	1.06	1	1	24,023,000
Pryce Corp.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	190,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	150,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	130,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	20,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.21	240,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	24	24	24	24	3,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series J	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,300
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.7	6,122,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	30,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	100,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	30,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	1,100,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	3,523,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.1	2.1	2	2	50,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.165	0.165	0.16	0.16	90,000
Sm Development Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	58,000
Sm Prime Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.3	2,036,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	360,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	200,000
Omico Corp.	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	1,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	380,000
OIL					
Imperial Res	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	61,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	9,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	60,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	600,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	2,392,140	48,333,075.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	120,335,600	573,196,840.00
PRO	13,239,000	51,922,940.00
Mining	1,940,000	263,600.00
OIL	71,660,000	232,000.00
GRAND TOTALS :	209,566,740	673,948,455.00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	449.44	DOWN 10.06
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,470.28	UP 29.07
PRO	553.49	UP 8.12
Mining	1,403.00	UP 10.66
OIL	1.20	UP 0.02
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	953.11	DOWN 19.92
Composite	1,573.83	UP 11.18

NO. OF ADVANCES: 20; NO. OF DECLINES: 27; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 48; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 95; NO. OF TRADES: 2,165

DISCLOSURES

CITYSTATE Savings Bank Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 25, 2 p.m. at the 20/F of Citystate Centre Building, Pasig City. Only stockholders of record as of April 16 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Company declared a cash dividend in the total amount of P12.42 million to its Series IV Cumulative Non-Convertible Redeemable Preferred Stock, payable on June 15 in favor of stockholders of record as of May 26.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Cebu Holdings Inc.** were Francisco Licuanan III, Jaime Ayala, Jose Rene Almendras, Miriam Katigbak, Antonio Abacan Jr., Natividad Alejo, Enrique Benedicto, Victor Chiongbian and Anastacio Muntuerto Jr.

* * *

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* * *

MATSUSHITA Electric Philippines Corp. declared a cash dividend of P0:20 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of May 31 and payable on June 24.

* * *

AIG Asian Opportunity Fund L.P. and **Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company** now have over 36.7 million and 9.1 million common shares, respectively, of SPI Technologies Inc. after their convertible notes were converted at a price of P8.83 each to SPI shares.

* * *

A. SORIANO Corp.'s 300,000 shares were bought by its wholly owned subsidiary, Anscor Consolidated Corp.

* * *

ABACUS Consolidated Resources and Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 14, 9 a.m. at the Rai Room of Club Filipino, San Juan. Stockholders of record as of June 4 will be entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Racing Club Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 21, 4 p.m. at Santa Ana Park, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of May 18 will be entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

BENPRES Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 7, 8 a.m. at the Meralco Theater, Pasig City. Only stockholders of record as of May 3 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PRUDENTIAL Bank will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 19, 4 p.m. at the 3/F of Prudential Bank Building. Only stockholders of record as of April 20 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

Settlement seen in tariff row

RP gov't to impose zero duty on some Singapore products

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has drawn up a draft executive order that would grant zero tariff on selected imports from Singapore—a move that may finally put an end to the petrochemical tariff dispute between Singapore and the Philippines.

Under the draft executive order, which was submitted for approval to members of the Tariff and Related Matters Committee and the Department of Finance, the selected imports will enjoy duty-free privilege as a form of compensation by the Philippine government to Singapore.

The products include lubricating oil and polymers, such as polyisobutylene in powder, granules, paste and other forms.

The need for the Philippines to compensate Singapore arose from the failure of the former to follow an earlier tariff-reduction agreement.

According to the schedule under the common effective preferential treatment scheme (CEPT) of the Asean Free Trade Agreement, tariffs on petrochemical products should be lowered to 5 percent beginning 2003.

The Philippines, however, set its tariffs on petrochemical products last year at 7 to 10 percent, with the aim of protecting the country's petrochemical industry.

The Philippines' decision not to reduce petrochemical tariffs as agreed upon by members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) prompted Singapore, a major petrochemical exporter, to lodge a protest against the Philippine government last year.

To settle the row between the two countries, their representatives met in December and decided that the Philippines would have to impose zero duties on selected imports from Singapore.

They agreed that the products to receive zero tariff should either be those that are not produced in the Philippines or those that do not have much competition here to avoid hurting a local industry.

The draft executive order, which will be submitted to Malacañang for the President's approval, also states that the zero tariff will only be granted on a temporary basis. The draft executive order said the duty-free privilege of the Singapore products would be good only until such time the government decides that the Philippines has already completed its compensation to Singapore.

The DTI would be the agency to determine whether the Philippine government has already completed its compensation to Singapore, but the decision may be based on the two countries' agreement made during the Asean Economic Ministers Meeting held in Cambodia last September.

During the meeting, the Philippines and Singapore agreed that the former will compensate the latter with a $4 million to $5 million worth of tariff reductions. The lowering of tariffs should take effect within a three-year period.

The draft EO should be signed soon to meet the Philippine government's commitment to implement the tariff reduction in the first half of this year.

NHMFC to raise stake in loan body

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

STATE-RUN housing arm National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. (NHMFC) is willing to hike its stake in a proposed "special purpose entity" that will manage and restructure the government's P14 billion in soured housing loans.

Sources told the INQUIRER that NHMFC might increase its stake to 49 percent from the original 25 percent in the SPE to share in the risk of managing the bad loans. On the other hand, the interest of the foreign investor who will win in the bidding for the bad loans will be reduced from 75 percent to 51 percent.

The bidding for the loans was originally scheduled to take place yesterday but the NHMFC decided to postpone it to May 18 to give way to the preparation of some documents.

Sources said four foreign investors were pre-qualified to bid for the loan portfolio.

Among the foreign investment banks that examined the housing agency's loan books were Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, Lone Star and Lehman Brothers, sources earlier said.

Of the P13.8 billion worth of delinquent loans for sale, about 85 percent are held by the private sector pension fund Social Security System and 15 percent by the Home Development Mutual Fund, more popularly known as the Pag-Ibig Fund.

The winning bidder and NHMFC will form a special purpose entity that will manage the loans. This entity will not be availing itself of the tax perks provided by the special purpose vehicle (SPV) law.

RP agencies, exporters all set for new port security system

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A GROUP of exporters yesterday welcomed the designation of the Department of Transportation and Communication as the sole agency responsible for the implementation of new international port security measures.

The new International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, regulating all vessels over 500 gross weight tons, will take effect on July 1.

According to members of the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. (Philexport), Executive Order No. 311—which President Macapagal-Arroyo signed on April 26—was the "missing link" that ensured the timely implementation of the ISPS Code.

The Code contains detailed security requirements for governments, port authorities and shipping companies. It also contains guidelines on how to meet such requirements.

According to Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima, several agencies are now preparing for the code's implementation, including the departments of trade and industry and of transportation and communication, the Maritime Industry Authority, Philippine Ports Authority, Export Development Council, Philippine Shippers Bureau, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Philexport and Cebu Ports Authority.

Ports that are not ISPS Code-compliant may face sanctions while shipments from that port may face strict evaluation and refused entry in all international ports, Purisima said.

DTI officials yesterday said that they are closely working with their counterparts in the DOTC officials as well as private stakeholders in finalizing the draft guidelines for the ISPS Code, which would lay out specific measures to be followed by ships and ports.

The guidelines are expected to be issued by the DOTC in the form of a department order.

Earlier, the PCCI warned that countries which do not comply with the Code might see lesser traffic of ISPS-compliant vessels on their ports.

With a majority of the 165 (signatories) being Philippine trading partners, non-compliance could result to negative effects on imports and exports, the exporters said.

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From page B1

From January to March, Smart said it added, together with Pilipino Telephone Corp.'s Talk N' Text, 1.4 million new subscribers to bring the group's mobile phone clients to about 14.4 million as of end-March from 12.9 million in end-2003.

But Globe said it added only a modest 277,197 to its subscriber base after weeding out inactive ones from the list, including those who fled to the competitor. Globe said subscribers stood at 9.1 million as of end-March from 8.9 million by the end of last year.

"This churn level reflects the subscribers who left the Globe network from June to October last year when the competitive over-the-air reload service was unchallenged," Globe said in a statement.

The Ayala-owned telecom firm said most of the churned subscribers were no longer generating revenues anyway.

Globe said its churn rate had dropped substantially after it introduced in November Autoload Max, an over-the-air reloading system similar to its competitor's Smart Load. Globe said the credit-sharing system called Share-A-Load launched in January also helped.

Nazareno said Smart and Talk N' Text had been transacting more than 2 million of these over-the-air reloads daily.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 4, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3 15	[illegible]	3.1	3 1	42 000
Bank of The Phil. Islands	42	42	41	41	719.300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39	39	39	39	800
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0 52	[illegible]53	0 52		990,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25	24 75		595 700
Philippine National Bank	3 25	[illegible]	[illegible]		7,000
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	[illegible]	[illegible]	1,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp	12	12	12	12	16 500
Security Bank Corp	16 5	16 5	16 5	16 5	4 600
Union Bank of the Phil.	24 [illegible]	[illegible]	24 [illegible]	24 [illegible]	13,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp	2000	[illegible]	2000	2000	20
Sun Life Financial Inc	1470	[illegible]	1470	1470	1.620
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
Digital Telecom Phils Ir	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	680 000
Globe Telecom Inc	875	875	860	865	44 870
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0 039	0 039	0 039	[illegible]039	1,500 000
ISM Communications Corp.	[illegible]037	0 038	0 037	[illegible]038	800 000
Pilipino Tel. Corp	1 6	1 66	1 56	1 64	30,319,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. C	[illegible]17	0 17	[illegible]17	[illegible]17	100 000
Phil. Long Dis. Tel Co	1100	1145	1090	1110	209.130
Ivantage Corp.	0 32	[illegible]	0 32	0 32	100 000
Philweb Corp	[illegible]012	[illegible]	0 011	[illegible]	19,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19 25	19[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	145 600
Manila Electric Co. B	[illegible]	[illegible]	30	[illegible]	1,774,200
Petron Corp	[illegible]	3[illegible]	[illegible]15		5 866 000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.1		97.000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	[illegible]	[illegible]	96	96	60.000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	[illegible]	1 38	[illegible]	1 36	586.000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	[illegible]	[illegible]		3 1	72 000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	90,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Sanitary Wares Mfg. Corp	[illegible]	0 18	[illegible]	[illegible]18	550.000
Union Cement Corp	[illegible]	1 64	[illegible]62	[illegible]	1 903.000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc	28	29	28		10.700
Jollibee Foods Corp		[illegible]			1,057.100
Cosmos Bottling Corp					11 000
RFM Corp					100.000
Swift Food Inc					140.000
San Miguel Corp A	[illegible]				453.500
San Miguel Corp B	1 5				29.900
Vitarich Corp	[illegible]	[illegible]			[illegible]50 000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala [illegible]	5 8	5 9			[illegible]549 000
Als[illegible]					100 000
Abo[illegible]					184 000
A. So[illegible]	94				[illegible]0 000
ATN H[illegible]	32				29 000
Benpr[illegible]					[illegible]090 000
DMCI[illegible]					3,000 000
[illegible]					1 700.000
[illegible]					100 000
[illegible]					1 521 400
[illegible]					1 700.000
[illegible]					182.000
[illegible]					[illegible]
[illegible]					[illegible]000
[illegible]					[illegible]000
[illegible]					[illegible]000
[illegible]					[illegible]000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Met[illegible]					10 000
Ma[illegible]					[illegible]4.023.000
[illegible]					190.000
[illegible]					150 000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
[illegible]					[illegible]
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
[illegible]					[illegible]
PROPERTY					
MINING					
OIL					

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
	[illegible]	[illegible]
AVERAGES	[illegible]	[illegible]

DISCLOSURES

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ELECTED directors of **Cebu Holdings Inc.** were Francisco Licuanan III, Jaime Ayala, Jose Rene Almendras, Miriam Kaligbak, Antonio Abacan Jr., Natividad Alejo, Enrique Benedicto, Victor Chiongbian and Anastacio Muntuerto Jr.

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BENPRES Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June [illegible], [illegible] a.m. at the Meralco Theater, Pasig City. Only stockholders of record as of May [illegible] are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

PRUDENTIAL Bank will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 19, 4 p.m. at the 3/F of Prudential Bank Building. Only stockholders of record as of April 20 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

PRESYONG TAMA, GAMOT PAMPAMILYA

Making branded quality medicines affordable to all

"Ang kalusugan ay karapatan ng bawa't Pilipino."

With this strong belief in the need to address the heavy burden of high medicine prices on the Filipino consumer, the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo instituted a sustained program that has significantly improved public access to quality healthcare.

PITC President Anthony A. Abad recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Drugstores Association of the Philippines as part of the Arroyo Adminstration's effort to broaden the market coverage of Presyong Tama and ensure that more Filipinos will have access to affordable medicines.

Today, three years after President Arroyo directed the Departments of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Health (DOH) to explore ways to reduce the price of medicines commonly prescribed for life-threatening illnesses, the *Presyong Tama, Gamot Pampamilya* program has become even more relevant and necessary.

Regular price surveys done by the Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC), an attached agency of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) which has been mandated to lead the implementation of the Presyong Tama program, reveals that retail drugstore prices of imported branded medicines have gone up by an average of 5.5% in April compared to price levels as of December 2003.

PITC President Anthony R.A. Abad reported that the price survey conducted by his company covers the 25 brands regularly imported by PITC under the Presyong Tama program. He likewise reported that PITC has yet to adjust its selling prices since implementation went full swing in 2001 to ensure the price benefits redound to the public's benefit.

The *Presyong Tama, Gamot Pampamilya* program, conceived and launched by the DTI under then Secretary Mar Roxas, involves the importation of widely recognized, off-patent branded medicines which are usually prescribed for the most common ailments and diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, infections and cardiovascular illnesses, among others.

An advocacy begun during his term as Congressman and Majority Leader, Presyong Tama was a key program implemented by Roxas which current DTI Secretary Cesar A.V. Purisima continues to support. Since he assumed leadership of the DTI, Purisima has issued instructions for PITC to expand the program to ensure that more Filipinos will be able to avail of its benefits.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo promised to bring down the cost of medicines. One of the important ways to achieve this is through the Presyong Tama program.

Abad noted price increases in most of the medicines during the period. Notable is the case of Adalat Retard 20mg tablet (generic name: Nifedipine), a commonly prescribed anti-hypertensive drug which is now being sold in drugstores at P39.75, 33.6% higher than its December 2003 level of P29.75. Under the Presyong Tama program, the same medicine is still being retailed at P5.75 — for a price difference or savings to the consumer of P34.00 per tablet or 86% lower than regular drugstore prices.

Price increases were not posted by all medicines, however. Although no price jump was seen in the case of an anti-cholesterol agent like Lopid (generic name: Gemfibrozil), retail drug prices for the 300mg and 600mg capsules are still high at P36.50 and P67.75 respectively. Presyong Tama prices are, on the average, still 45% lower at P19.15 for the 300mg capsule and P38.35 for 600mg.

Local drugstores have likewise increased prices of the anti-hypertensive medicines covered by the program by an average of 9.1%, and anti-anginal agents by 7.2%. The price of Isordil, for example, has gone up to P12.00 per 5mg SL tablet and P10.50 per 10mg tablet. These were sold at P11.25 and P9.75 per tablet respectively when a survey was conducted last December 2003. In contrast, the same drugs are being sold under the government's Presyong Tama program at an average of 73% lower — P2.60 and P3.50 per tablet respectly, Abad reported.

"A patient can save a lot if he buys his medicines from authorized Presyong Tama outlets or distributors," Secretary Purisima said. The price differences between medicines sold under the DTI program and through retail drugstores for the 25 brands covered range from a low of 30% in the case of Augmentin 375mg and 625mg tablets (Co-Amoxiclav), a commonly prescribed anti-bacterial medicine, to a high of 87% for Adalat Retard 20mg tablet (Nifedipine) and Serenace 5mg/ml injection.

In addition to Adalat, the program also makes available other medicines for hypertension such as Dilzem (Diltiazem), Tenormin and Betaloc.

Meanwhile, retail prices of the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs available under the program — namely Ponstan (Mefenamic Acid) and Voltaren (Diclofenac) — have gone up by an average of 5% during the period.

Medicines for diabetic patients such as Daonil and Euglucon, both widely recognized brands of Glibenclamide have now become more expensive compared to December 2003 levels by 4.7%, while prices of anti-bacterials have increased by an average of 4.2%. Included under this category are some of the popular brands Bactrim (Cotrimoxazole), Ciprobay (Ciprofloxacin), Ceporex (Cefalexin) and Augmentin (Co-Amoxiclav).

"By gradually expanding the list of medicines available under the program, the government is better able to address the health needs of our citizens," Abad reported. "PITC is therefore seriously looking at the expansion of its product line. If we can offer affordable medicines, then more Filipinos can obtain effective treatment," he added. DTI Secretary Purisima has therefore pushed PITC to seriously assess the impact of the program and improve it even further to benefit more sectors and consumers.

Studies have shown that the Philippines has the highest medicine prices in Asia, next only to Japan. In some cases, medicines are sold at prices 10 times higher than in other Asian countries although these are developed, manufactured and marketed by the same companies, Abad added. The program manifests the serious effort of the Arroyo Administration to address the unfortunate state in the domestic retail market for medicines by seeking to make lower-cost, high-quality medicines available to all.

"We, at PITC, believe that the most important accomplishment of this project, so far, is that we have been able to show that lowering the cost of medicines is possible. Commonly prescribed branded drugs sold under the Presyong Tama, Gamot Pampamilya program are anywhere from 30 to 87% cheaper than those distributed by multinational pharmaceutical companies," Abad said, "yet these are not subsidized prices."

More specifically, the program's objective is to ensure consumers get value for money by providing them better access to commonly prescribed branded medicines at considerably lower prices. The parallel drug importation program of the government has proven to be an effective tool to achieve this aim.

Purisima noted that it is unfortunate many poor Filipinos who suffer from common diseases and ailments are unable to gain access even to basic medication. Because prices are very high, most of them are unable to even purchase maintenance medicines, so there are numerous cases left untreated. Worse, many Filipinos die without having even received medication which could have allowed them to live longer.

When the program began in 2001, seven brands were made available through seven selected hospitals retained by the Department of Health (DOH). Today, this range has been expanded to a total of 25 brands covering the following categories: anti-bacterials, anti-hypertensives, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), oral hypoglycemic or anti-diabetes agents, anti-anginal agents, anti-cholesterol agents, bronchodilators, anti-motility agents or anti-diarrheal medicines, anti-psychotics and anti-epileptics.

Under the program, medicines sold come only from original manufacturers, multinational subsidiaries or authorized licensees and are of the same quality and efficacy as the higher-priced counterparts sold in local drugstores. To ensure the highest quality, the medicines are tested by the drug regulatory agency in the source country before shipment to the Philippines. The Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) — the same agency that tests and approves the sale of medicines in the local retail market — also conducts its own rigid quality tests on the samples before these are distributed to participating outlets.

To date, more than 350 outlets in local government units, DOH-retained hospitals, selected NGOs and private hospital pharmacies all over the country, are participating in the program by distributing low priced medicines to the public at government Suggested Retail Prices (SRPs). A number of LGUs and NGOs however dispense the medicines for free to their constituents or beneficiaries.

Over 130 local government units at the provincial, city and municipal levels have purchased medicines under the Presyong Tama program and made these available to consumers.

The City of Manila, for example, has purchased a total of almost P10 million worth of medicines through Presyong Tama since 2002. Other regular buyers for the past 3 years are the provinces of Zamboanga del Norte (P9.1 million), Capiz (P8.6 million), Cavite (P4.9 million) and Albay (P2.4 million).

PITC carefully screens the distribution outlets to ensure prices will be maintained and medicines will continue to be accessible to all. The government is guarding against the proliferation of counterfeit medicines that could sabotage the success of the program.

For details, please call
PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL TRADING CORPORATION PHARMACEUTICALS DEPARTMENT
NDC Bldg., 116 Tordesillas St.,
Salcedo Village,
1227 Makati City
Tel. Nos.: (632) 892-1647
892-1252
Fax Nos.: (632) 892-2021
892-2054
E-MAIL: pitc@info.com.ph

List of participating outlets

DOH-retained hospitals:

National Capital Region (NCR): Valenzuela General Hospital, San Lorenzo Ruiz Women's Hospital, Dr Jose N Rodriguez Memorial Hospital, Amang Rodriguez Medical Center, National Children's Hospital, Quirino Memorial Medical Center, East Avenue Medical Center, Philippine Orthopedic Hospital, National Kidney and Transplant Institute, Lung Center of the Philippines, Philippine Children's Medical Center, Philippine Heart Center, Taguig Pateros District Hospital, Rizal Medical Center, National Center for Mental Health, Dr Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital, Jose R Reyes Memorial Medical Center, San Lazaro Hospital, Tondo Medical Center, Las Pinas District Hospital, Research Institute for Tropical Medicine

Region 1: Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center, Ilocos Training and Regional Medical Center, Region 1 Medical Center.

Region 2: Cagayan Valley Medical Center, Veterans Regional Hospital, Batanes General Hospital, Southern Isabela General Hospital.

Region 3: Dr Paulino Garcia Memorial Research and Medical Center, Talavera Extension Hospital, Jose B Lingad Memorial General Hospital, Mariveles Mental Hospital, Bataan Provincial Hospital.

Region 4: Batangas Regional Hospital, Ospital ng Palawan, Culion Sanitarium & Balala Hospital.

Region 5: Bicol Medical Center, Don Susano Rodriguez Memorial Medical Hospital, Bicol Sanitarium, Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital.

Region 6: Western Visayas Medical Center, Don Jose Monfort Medical Center Extension Hospital, Western Visayas Sanitarium, Western Visayas Regional Hospital.

Region 7: Vicente Sotto Sr Memorial Medical Center, St Anthony Mother & Child Hospital, Talisay District Hospital, Eversly Sanitarium, Don Emilio Del Valle Memorial Hospital, Gov Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital.

Region 8: Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center, Schistosomiasis Control and Research Hospital.

Region 9: Zamboanga City Medical Center, Labuan Public Hospital, Mindanao Central Sanitarium, Dr Jose Rizal Memorial Hospital, Margosatubig Regional Hospital, Basilan General Hospital

Region 10: Northern Mindanao Medical Center, Mayor Hilarion Ramiro Sr Reg'l Trng & Teaching Hospital, Camiguin General Hospital.

Region 11: Davao Medical Center, Davao Regional Hospital

Region 12: Cotabato Regional and Medical Center, Amai Pakpak Medical Center, Cotabato Sanitarium.

CAR: Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center, Luis Hora Memorial Regional Hospital, Conner District Hospital, Far North Luzon General Hospital & Training Center.

CARAGA: Adela Serra Ty Memorial Medical Center, Caraga Regional Hospital

ARMM: Sulu Sanitarium, Maguindanao Provincial Hospital, Buluan District Hospital, Dr Serapio Montaner Provincial Hospital.

Outlets in participating local governments:

National Capital Region (NCR): Manila, Ospital ng Tondo, Gat Andres Bonifacio Memorial Medical Center, Manila City Health Department Muntinlupa City, Muntinlupa Municipal Health Office Pasig City, Pasig City General Hospital, Pasig City Health Office Valenzuela Barangay Health Office, Valenzuela City, Navotas, Navotas Emergency & Lying-in Clinic Pasay City, Pasay City Health Center, Quezon City, Novaliches District Hospital, Quezon City Health Department

Region 1: Province of Ilocos Norte, Gov Roque Ablan, Sr Memorial Hospital, Bangui District Hospital, Province of La Union, Balaoan District Hospital, Bacnotan District Hospital, Naguilian District Hospital, Rosario District Hospital, Dona Gregoria Memorial Hospital, Caba Medicare Hospital Province of Pangasinan, Pangasinan Provincial Hospital, Dasol Community Hospital, Lingayen Community Hospital, Bolinao Medicare Community Hospital, Pangasinan Provincial Health Office.

Region 2: Province of Cagayan, Cagayan Provincial Hospital Province of Isabela, Isabela Provincial Hospital. Province of Quirino, Quirino Provincial Hospital Aglipay District Hospital Tuguegarao City, Cagayan, People's Emergency Hospital Municipality of Calayan, Cagayan, Calayan Municipal Health Office Municipality of Gonzaga, Cagayan, Gonzaga Municipal Health Office Municipality of San Mariano, Isabela, San Mariano District Hospital Southern Isabela General Hospital.

Region 3: Province of Aurora, Aurora Provincial Hospital Province of Bataan, Botika ng Bayan ng Bataan Province of Bulacan, Bulacan Provincial Hospital Province of Nueva Ecija, Gapan District Hospital, San Antonio District Hospital, Guimba District Hospital, Bongabon District Hospital, Gabaldon District Hospital, Carranglan District Hospital Province of Pampanga, Mabalacat District Hospital, Ricardo P. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital, Emigdio Cruz Memorial Hospital, Porac District Hospital, Macabebe District Hospital, San Luis District Hospital, Diosdado P Macapagal Memorial Hospital. Province of Tarlac, Tarlac Provincial Hospital Province of Zambales, Candelaria District Hospital, San Marcelino District Hospital, Zambales Provincial Health Office Olongapo City, Zambales, James L Gordon Memorial Hospital San Jose City, Nueva Ecija San Jose City Health Office Municipality of Orion, Bataan, Orion Municipal Health Center

Region 4: Province of Batangas, Batangas Provincial Health Office Province of Cavite, Cavite Center for Mental Health, General Trias Medicare Hospital, Gen Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Hospital, Dra Olivia Salamanca Memorial Hospital, Cavite Municipal Hospital, Tagaytay Medicare Hospital, Dasmarinas Bagong Bayan Memorial Hospital, Naic Medicare Hospital, GMA Medicare Hospital Kawit Kalayaan Hospital, Andres Bonifacio Memorial Hospital, Cavite Provincial Health Office Province of Laguna, Laguna District Hospital, Luisiana District Hospital Province of Marinduque, Sta Cruz Marinduque Hospital Province of Quezon, Quezon Memorial Hospital, Gumaca Medicare Community Hospital, Candelaria Municipal Hospital Mauban District Hospital Bondoc Peninsula District Hospital. Province of Romblon, Romblon Provincial Hospital Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro, Botika ng Bayan sa Calapan Tagaytay City, Cavite, Ospital ng Tagaytay Tagaytay City Health Office Municipality of Gasan, Marinduque, Gasan Health Center Municipality of Imus, Cavite, Imus Municipal Health Office District I, Imus Municipal Health Office District II Municipality of Mauban, Quezon, Mauban Municipal Health Center Municipality of Pitogo, Quezon, Pitogo Municipal Health Center Mun of Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro, Sablayan District Hospital Mun of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, San Jose Municipal Health Office Dispensary.

Region 5: Province of Albay, Ziga Memorial Hospital, Josefina Belmonte Duran Memorial District Hospital Pioduran Memorial District Hospital Rapu-Rapu District Hospital, Albay Provincial Health Office Province of Catanduanes, Eastern Bicol Provincial Hospital, Gatag Municipal Hospital, Viga District Hospital, San Andres District Hospital Pandan District Hospital, Bato Maternity Children's Hospital Ligao City, Albay, Ligao City Health Office Tabaco City, Albay, Tabaco Rural Health Unit Sorsogon City, Sorsogon, Sorsogon City Health Center. Municipality of Gubat, Sorsogon, Gubat District Hospital Municipality of Prieto Diaz, Sorsogon, Diaz District Hospital.

Region 6: Province of Aklan, Aklan Provincial Hospital, Dr Rafael S Tumbokon Memorial Provincial Hospital Province of Capiz, Roxas Memorial General Hospital, Baelan Provincial Hospital Sen Gerry M Roxas Community Hospital, Mambusao General Hospital, Tapaz District Hospital Province of Guimaras, Guimaras Provincial Hospital Province of Iloilo, Federico Roman Tirador Memorial District Hospital, Dumangas District Hospital, Rep Pedro G Trono Memorial Hospital, Dr Ricardo Y Ladrido Memorial Hospital, Ramon Tabiana Memorial Hospital, Jesus M Colmenares District Hospital, Dr Ricardo S Provido Sr Memorial District Hospital DVPS Memorial Provincial Hospital Province of Negros Occidental, Negros Occidental Provincial Hospital Valladolid District Hospital Isabela District Hospital Bago City, Negros Occidental, Bago City Health Office San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, San Carlos City Health Office Silay City, Negros Occidental, Silay City Health Office Sipalay City, Negros Occidental, Sipalay City Health Office Talisay City, Negros Occidental, Talisay City Health Office Mun of E.B.Magalona, Negros Occidental, E.B Magalona Municipal Health Center Municipality of Miagao, Iloilo, Miagao Rural Health Unit Municipality of Murcia, Negros Occidental, Murcia Municipal Health Office Municipality of Oton, Iloilo, Oton Municipal Health Center Municipality of Toboso, Negros Occidental, Toboso Municipal Health Center Municipality of Ajuy, Iloilo, Ajuy Rural Health Office.

Region 7: Province of Cebu, Argao District Hopsital, Oslob District Hospital, Bantayan District Hospital, Tuburan District Hospital, Sogod District Hospital, Sta Rosa District Hospital, Ricardo Maningo District Hospital, Carcar District Hospital, Mariano Jesus Cuenco District Hospital, Daan Bantayan District Hospital, Tinamungajan District Hospital, Virallo District Hospital, Lapu-Lapu District Hospital, Minglanilla District Hospital, Bardian District Hospital, Balamban District Hospital, Bantayan District Hospital, Danao District Hospital Province of Negros Oriental, Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital, Corazon Locsin Montelibano Memorial Hospital, Bindoy District Hospital, Gov William Villegas District Hospital, Bayawan District Hospital Province of Bohol, Cong Simeon Toribio Memorial Hospital, Teodoro B Galagar Memorial Hospital, Cong Natalio P Castillo Memorial Hospital, Manbajoc Community Hospital, Candijay Community Hospital, Clarin Community Hospital, Pres Garcia Memorial Hospital, Catigbian District Hospital Bais City, Negros Oriental, Bais City Health Office Bayawan City, Negros Oriental, Bayawan City Health Office Canlaon City, Negros Oriental, Canlaon City Health Office Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, Dumaguete City Health Office. Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Tagbilaran City Health Office Municipality of Lila, Bohol, Lila Municipal Health Office Municipality of San Miguel, Bohol, San Miguel Municipal Health Office

Region 8: Western Leyte Provincial Hospital, Abuyog District Hospital, Carigara District Hospital, Hilongos District Hospital, Northwestern District Hospital, Tabango Community Hospital, Matalom Community Hospital, Ormoc District Hospital, Burauen District Hospital, Manuel B Veloso Memorial Hospital, Babatngon Community Hospital, Kananga Community Hospital, Villaba Community Hospital, Leyte Provincial Health Office Province of Leyte, Eastern Samar Provincial Health Office, Province of Eastern Samar, Maasin City Health Office, Maasin City, Southern Leyte. Ormoc Community Hospital Ormoc City, Leyte. Alangalang Municipal Health Office, Municipality of Alangalang, Leyte. St Bernard Municipal Health Office, Mun of St. Bernard, Southern Leyte. Tanauan Municipal Health Office. Municipality of Tanauan, Leyte.

Region 9: Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Sur. Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Hospital, Labason District Hospital, Pinan District Hospital Sindangan District Hospital, Siocon District Hospital Manukan Community and Medicare Hospital, Liloy Community & Medicare Hospital, Sungao Osmena Municipal Hospital, Sibutad Municipal Hospital, Province of Zamboanga del Norte.Zamboanga City Government Hospital

Region 10: Province of Bukidnon, Bukidnon Provincial Health Office Province of Camiguin, Catarman District Hospital, Mambajao Rural Health Unit, Mahinog Rural Health Unit, Sagay Health Unit Province of Misamis Occidental, Misamis Occidental Provincial Hospital Malaybalay City, Bukidnon, Malaybalay Municipal Health Office Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental, Oroquieta City Health Office Ozamis City, Misamis Occidental, Ozamis City Health Office Valencia City, Bukidnon, Valencia Health Office Municipality of Kibawe, Bukidnon, Kibawe Rural Health Unit Mun of Plaridel, Misamis Occidental, Plaridel Municipal Health Office Municipality of Jasaan, Misamis Oriental, Jasaan Municipal Health Office Mun of Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, Tagoloan Municipal Health Office.

Region 11: Province of Davao del Norte, Carmen District Hospital Kapalong District Hospital Samal District Hospital Davao del Norte Provincial Health Office Province of Davao del Sur, Davao del Sur Provincial Hospital. Province of Davao Oriental, Davao Provincial Hospital Cateel District Hospital, Lupon District Hospital, Gov Generoso District Hospital Manay District Hospital Province of South Cotabato, South Cotabato Provincial Hospital General Santos City, South Cotabato, General Santos City Health Office Samal City, Davao del Norte, Samal City Health Office Mun of Banaybanay, Davao Oriental, Banaybanay Municipal Health Office Municipality of Lupon, Davao Oriental, Lupon Rural Health Office Municipality of Manay, Davao Oriental, Manay Municipal Health Office Municipality of Mati, Davao Oriental, Mati Rural Health Unit Municipality of San Isidro, Davao Oriental, San Isidro Municipal Health Office

Region 12: Province of Sultan Kudarat, Sultan Kudarat Provincial Health Office Iligan City, Lanao del Norte, Iligan City Health Office Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat, Tacurong City Health Office Municipality of Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, Isulan Rural Health Office Municipality of Quirino, Sultan Kudarat, Quirino Municipal Health Office.

Region 13 (CARAGA): Province of Agusan del Norte, Nasipit District Hopsital Kitcharao District Hospital, Kabadbaran District Hospital Agusan del Norte Provincial Health Office Province of Agusan del Sur, D O Plaza Memorial Hospital Province of Surigao del Norte, Botica sa Barangay ni Lyndon Province of Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Sur Provincial Health Office Butuan City, Agusan del Norte, Butuan City Health Office Surigao City, Surigao del Norte, Surigao City Health Office Municipality of Cagwait, Surigao del Sur, Cagwait Municipal Health Office. Municipality of Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur, Hinatuan Municipal Health Office Municipality of Tandag, Surigao del Sur, Tandag Municipal Health Office Mun of Gen Luna, Surigao del Norte, General Luna Municipal Health Office Mun of San Isidro, Surigao del Norte, San Isidro Municipal Health Office

Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR): Province of Abra, Abra Provincial Hospital Province of Benguet, Benguet General Hospital Province of Ifugao, Mayoyao District Hospital, Ifugao Provincial Hospital Municipality of Kiangan, Ifugao, Kiangan Municipal Health Office

Other Government Agencies:

AFP Commissary & Exchange Service (AFPCES), Quezon City AFP Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM), Camp Aquino, Tarlac Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Bureau of Corrections, Muntinlupa City Department of Health, Center for Health Development (DOH-CHD), Region IV Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), National Capital Region (NCR) Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), National Capital Region (NCR) Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) University of the Philippines (UP) Los Banos

NGOs/Cooperatives:

Ambigation Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Kalinga Bacolod Our Lady of Mercy Hospital, Cagayan de Oro Federation of Senior Citizens Association Coops for Christ Botika ng Bayan, Antipolo Davao City Senior Citizens Cooperative (Drugstore) Federation of Senior Citizens' Associations of the Philippines (FESCAP), Makati Chapter Federation of Senior Citizens' Associations of the Philippines (FESCAP), Valenzuela Chapter Health Management Research Group Foundation, Davao Integrated Midwives' Association of the Philippines (IMAP), Mindanao/Sulu Chapter Jarlyn Marketing, Dumaguete City Jaro Archdiocesan Social Action Center, Ormoc Sugar Planters Association, Farmers Medical Center, Our Lady of Refuge Dangpanan Foundation, Inc., General Santos City Soroptimist International, Cotabato St Therese Polyclinic, Bacon, Sorsogon Sta Ana Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Davao

Private Hospitals/Drugstores.

RM Pharmacy, Lanao del Norte Madonna & Child Hospital, Cagayan de Oro Cagayan Capitol General Hospital Foundation, Inc., Cagayan de Oro Dr Lorenzo B Principe Clinic, Davao San Dionisio Credit Cooperative, Paranaque Rosario District Hospital, Pasig City Sinbajon Medical Clinic, Talisay, Cebu Tojong Medical Clinic, Lapu Lapu City, Cebu Pavino Medical Clinic, Davao Heart and Lung Clinic, Laoag Sacred Heart Medical Clinic, Laoag Our Lady of Fatima Medical Clinic and Hospital, Laoag Robiso OB-Gyn & Children's Clinic, Davao Bon Lian Charity Clinic, Tondo, Manila Biloy Medical Clinic, Davao del Norte

PRESYONG TAMA, GAMOT PAMPAMILYA PRICE LIST

(Prices in Philippine Pesos per Tablet/Bottle/Unit)

DRUG/DOSAGE	GENERIC NAME	PRESYONG TAMA (P)	PRESYO NGAYON SA PRIBADONG BOTIKA (P)	MATITIPID	
[illegible]					
BACTRIM ADULT 400/80mg tab	Cotrimoxazole	2.80	15.60	P 12.80	82%
BACTRIM DS 800/160mg tab	Cotrimoxazole	5.10	27.50	20.90	81%
BAYCIP (Ciprobay) 250mg tab	Ciprofloxacin	19.50	56.00	36.50	65%
BAYCIP (Ciprobay) 500mg tab	Ciprofloxacin	32.50	77.75	45.25	58%
PHEXIN (Ceporex) 250mg cap	Cefalexin	11.80	19.15	7.35	38%
PHEXIN (Ceporex) 500mg cap	Cefalexin	21.55	35.50	13.95	39%
PHEXIN (Ceporex) 250mg/5ml, 30ml susp	Cefalexin	99.75	174.75	75.00	43%
AUGMENTIN 375mg tab	Co-amoxiclav	51.20	72.00	20.80	29%
AUGMENTIN 625mg tab	Co-amoxiclav	63.50	89.25	25.75	29%
[illegible]					
ADALAT RETARD 20mg tab	Nifedipine	5.75	39.75	34.00	86%
IONOZEM (Dilzem) 30mg tab	Diltiazem	9.65	26.00	16.35	63%
IONOZEM (Dilzem) 60mg tab	Diltiazem	15.25	36.75	21.50	59%
TENORMIN 50mg tab	Atenolol	8.70	23.25	14.55	63%
BETALOC 50mg tab	Metoprolol	4.70	10.70	6.00	56%
BETALOC 100mg tab	Metroprolol	8.20	18.60	10.40	56%
[illegible]					
PONSTAN 250mg tab	Mefenamic Acid	5.40	11.50	6.10	53%
PONSTAN 500mg tab	Mefenamic Acid	8.65	22.00	13.35	61%
VOVERAN (Voltaren) 50mg tab	Diclofenac	5.85	18.00	12.15	68%
VOVERAN SR (Voltaren) 75mg tab	Diclofenac	7.80	23.00	15.20	66%
VOVERAN SR (Voltaren) 100mg tab	Diclofenac	10.40	35.25	24.85	70%
[illegible]					
DAONIL 5mg tab	Glibenclamide	3.10	9.30	6.20	67%
EUGLUCON 5mg tab	Glibenclamide	5.20	9.70	4.50	46%
[illegible]					
ISORDIL 5mg SL tab	Isosorbide Dinitrate	2.60	12.00	9.40	78%
ISORDIL 10mg tab	Isosorbide Dinitrate	3.50	10.50	7.00	67%
[illegible]					
LOPID 300mg cap	Gemfibrozil	19.15	36.50	17.35	48%
LOPID 600mg tab	Gemfibrozil	38.35	67.75	29.40	43%
[illegible]					
BRICANYL 2.5mg tab	Terbutaline Sulfate	3.60	8.25	4.65	56%
BRICANYL 5mg tab	Terbutaline Sulfate	5.85	19.75	13.90	70%
BRICANYL 250mcg x 200doses inh	Terbutaline Sulfate	217.15	459.75	242.60	53%
BRICANYL 1.5mg/5ml, 100ml syr	Terbutaline Sulfate	80.85	162.70	81.85	50%
VENTORLIN (Ventolin) 100mcg x 200doses inh	Salbutamol	159.60	331.50	171.90	52%
VENTORLIN (Ventolin) 2mg/5ml, 100ml syr	Salbutamol	72.10	167.50	95.40	57%
[illegible]					
BUSCOPAN 20mg/ml inj	Hyoscine-N-butylbromide	28.60	71.75	43.15	60%
BUSCOPAN 10mg tab	Hyoscine-N-butylbromide	4.85	9.40	4.55	48%
IMODIUM 2mg cap	Loperamide	4.75	10.25	5.50	54%
[illegible]					
SERENACE 1.5mg tab	Haloperidol	3.25	7.00	3.75	54%
SERENACE 5mg tab	Haloperidol	8.10	20.50	12.40	60%
SERENACE 10mg tab	Haloperidol	11.30	20.50	9.20	45%
SERENACE 20mg tab	Haloperidol	16.80	41.75	24.95	60%
SERENACE 5mg/ml inj	Haloperidol	17.80	141.75	123.95	87%
[illegible]					
TEGRITAL (Tegretol) 200mg tab	Carbamazepine	6.05	15.00	8.95	60%
TEGRITAL CR (Tegretol) 400mg tab	Carbamazepine	11.15	41.50	30.35	73%
TEGRITAL (Tegretol) 100mg/5ml, 100ml syr	Carbamazepine	119.20	302.50	183.30	61%
DILANTIN 100mg cap	Phenytoin	4.80	22.50	17.70	79%

As of 30 April 2004

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

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CRUDE COCO OIL SHORTAGE

Palace urged to lift 15% tariff on imported palm oil

By Ronnel W. Domingo

COCONUT oil refiners yesterday called on Malacañang to temporarily lift the 15-percent import duty on processed palm oil, citing tight supply of raw materials for cooking oil.

Jesus Arranza, president of the Coconut Oil Refiners Association (Cora), said that the refiners are seriously looking into importing palm olein—fractionated and refined palm oil—in light of the tight supply and the resulting high prices of copra and crude coconut oil (CNO).

Data from the association showed that palm olein was considerably cheaper to import than CNO. Delivery prices for April and May for CNO was pegged at $780 per metric ton compared to $547.50 per ton of palm olein, a difference of $232.50 a ton.

The price difference would even be higher, at about $300 to $350 a ton, if olein were compared to refined coconut oil, Arranza said.

"The temporary lifting of the import duty would result in the lowering of edible oil prices," he said.

Without the tariff, price could go down by P16 per kilo of cooking oil or P272 for each 17-kilo can, which is the standard container used in the dip-out or "tingi" market.

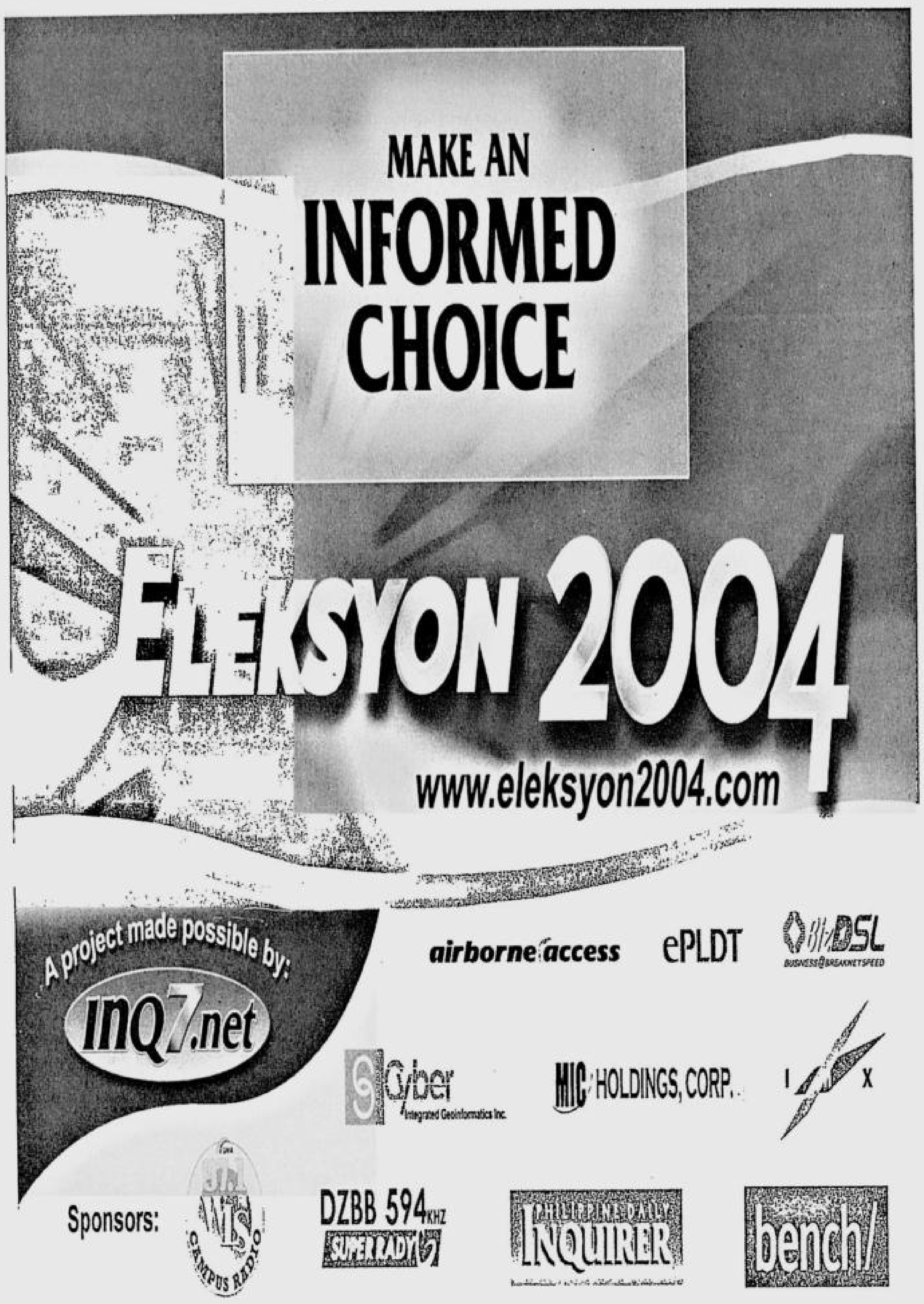
Last month, the National Price Coordinating Council reported an upward trend in the price of cooking oil. The NPCC said prices had gone up in the first quarter by 20 percent, but has stabilized this month at P17 for a *lapad* bottle, and P34 for long neck.

The NPCC cited a report from the Philippine Coconut Authority, which said that the price trend was due to the temporary tightness in the supply of copra in the world market.

Arranza also said that the locally produced coconut oil, which would be replaced by cheaper imported palm olein, could be exported at a premium.

He said the possibility of lifting the tariff on palm olein was great since the government had previously allowed the duty-free importation of automotive spare parts in an effort to support the transport industry.

"(If the government did that for the transport sector), how much more when it involves cooking oil which is a prime commodity?" Arranza said.



cut to clip
Galing Pilipino Movement
www.galingpilipino.com

Pil·i·pi·no\pilə·pēnō\ n. 1 a native or citizen of the Philippines. 2 hospitable; always smiling. 3 helpful; caring. 4 hard-working with a heart. 5 galing.

I-Gi·las\i·gi'ləs\ n. 1 means "ilabas ang gilas." 2 sounds like "aguila" or the eagle, king of the air known for visual acuity and far-reaching vision. – v. 3 recognizing something good or excellent done by a Pilipino. 4 showcasing Pilipino values or good deeds. 5 done by ordinary Pilipinos doing ordinary things, extraordinarily well. 6 spontaneous and sincere, coming from the heart. – adj. 7 Galing Pilipino.

Sali na!

Key to the success of Galing Pilipino Movement is a corps of active and dedicated volunteers who keep an eye out for Pilipinos who show "gilas" or "galing." These volunteers are known as GPM I-Gilas. While 'I-Gilas' literally means "ilabas ang gilas," the term was inspirationally derived from the Philippine Eagle whose visual acuity and far-reaching vision symbolizes strength and tenacity. This is a fitting symbol of the role every I-Gilas volunteer – a purposive search to bring out and affirm what is good and excellent about being Pilipino. Be one of the rare breed who will champion the cause of good values at work. You will have a crucial role to help shape the new Pilipino and usher in the Galing Generation. Like the reformers of eras ago – Rizal, Luna, del Pilar – you have in you the power to effect change in the hearts, minds and souls of our countrymen. And because you believe in the GALING of the Pilipino you are in the position to affirm the best by awarding a GP award sticker.

For more information in becoming an I-Gilas Volunteer contact us at
GPM Foundation, Inc.
Unit 262 Cityland Pioneer Condominium, Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City
Telephone 631 3932 Telefax 633 1089 Mobile 0917 835 4829
E-mail i_gilas@galingpilipino.com / kwento@galingpilipino.com

Demand for RP carageenan rises

By Christine Gaylican

THE PHILIPPINES needs to increase production of seaweed by 170,000 metric tons if the country hopes to satisfy growing world demand for local carrageenan, according to Filipino producers.

If Filipino producers were to increase production 32 percent to 168,014 metric tons, then the country could expect $186 million in additional revenue from the export of carrageenan in 2004, said Benson U. Dakay, chairman of Seaweed Industry Association of the Philippines (SIAP).

Carrageenan is widely used as an additive in food and consumer products including jellies, ice cream, processed milk and meat products, animal feeds, pharmaceutical and other oral hygiene products such as toothpaste.

According to data from SIAP, demand for local carrageenan rose to 55,000 MT, on top of the worldwide export requirement of 220,000 MT.

To satisfy this demand, the local industry needs to expand the seaweed growing areas, Dakay said during an interview.

We hope to turn in $300 million in export revenue by year 2006, Dakay added.

The Philippines had already exported some $141 million worth of raw and semi-processed seaweed products to the United States, Europe, Canada and parts of Latin America, Indonesia, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
Collection District II - B

MANILA INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER PORT

May 4. 2004

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 2601 to 2610 of the TCCP, as amended, in relatioln to CMO 6-2003 dated March 17, 2003, and CMO 18- 2003 dated 25 July 2003, there will be a Public Auction Sale to be conducted by this Port on May 14, 2004 at 2:30 P.M. to be held at the 2nd Floor, MICP Bldg, North Harbor, Isla Puting Bato, Tondo, Manila, the herein described articles in lot. Said articles shall be available for viewing on May 13, 2004. In the event of a failed bidding, the second auction shall be conducted on the third business day following the first bidding

Lot No. 031-04 SHINLA TRADING R.A. 7651 1st Advertisement "As Is Where Is" Note: Only licensed battery scrap dealers with Permit to Transport issued by the DENR will be allowed to participate pursuant to R.A.. 6969-Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act of 1990 Floor Price : Php4,309,259.60	201 Pkgs. Assorted Brands/Sizes Scrap Used Drained Whole Battery Scrap Rains Location: Dassad , Contr. Nos. TEXU-3722449, REGU-3080939, REGU-2957237,TEXU-3669112, REGU-2986364, TEXU-3899202, CRXU-1107630, REGU-3053316, REGU-3001380, REGU-3074983, TEXU-3959940, TRIU-1923129, REGU-2948030, TTNU-3043196, TRIU-3805151, REGU-2979745, GLDU-0349251, GLDU-0270584,REGU-2953904, REGU-2958300, REGU-3096344, TEXU-3898268, PRSU-2214654, REGU-2946274 and REGU-3031127.
Lot No. 032-04 ECRA TRADING A.P No. 2003-02 1st Advertisement " As Is Where Is" Floor Price: Php 73,300.00	Assorted used articles 68 pcs. blower for car airconditioner 1 pc. gas tank 102 pcs. bicycles 2 pcs. car bumper 3 pcs car hood 4 pcs strult 1 pc. Toyota front cut 1 pc. Nissan front cut 87 pcs. bucket seats Location: ICTSI CY, Contr. No. GLDU-0578860
Lot No. 033-04 WILTON JARIC S I No 99-124 1st Advertisement "As Is Where Is" Floor Price: Php172, 620 00	13,056 pairs Ladies' Casual Shoes, "Skaters" brand, high soles, suede canvass 16,632 pairs Ladies' Casual Shoes, "Skaters" brand, high soles, synthetic leather 2,771 pairs Ladies' PVC Sandals, "Skaters/Polo" brand, suede canvass 2,064 pairs Children's Casual Shoes, "Skaters" brand, synthetic leather Made in China. Note: The articles have been stored at the ICTSI container yard since 1999. Shoes/sandals soles can be easily detached on its top canvass due to heat, brittle, out of fashion/outmoded. Location: ICTSI CY, Contr. Nos FSCU-6156371, FSCU-6156432, FSCU-6156772
Lot No 034-04 UNITED BROTHERS INTEGRATED CORP. R.A 7651 1st Advertisement 'As Is Where Is" Floor Price: Php84,000.00	12,000 kgs. (approx.) used assorted industrial materials in junk condition due to damaged top portion of the container van. Location: ICTSI CY, Contr. No. Texu-5019348
Lot No. 035-04 FAIRMEN TRADING S.I. Nos. 99-120 & 120A 1st Advertisement 'As Is Where Is' Floor Price: Php378,545 00	36, 812 pcs. mini pvc quarts alarm clocks - most clocks are not functioning when tested during examination due to long storage since Jan. 11, 1999 Defective clock motor mechanism. 95,760 pcs. AAA batteries, expired 605 pcs mini calculators–most of the calculators are not functioning. Location: ICTSI CY, Contr. No. UGMU-8553028-20

Basic Guidelines:

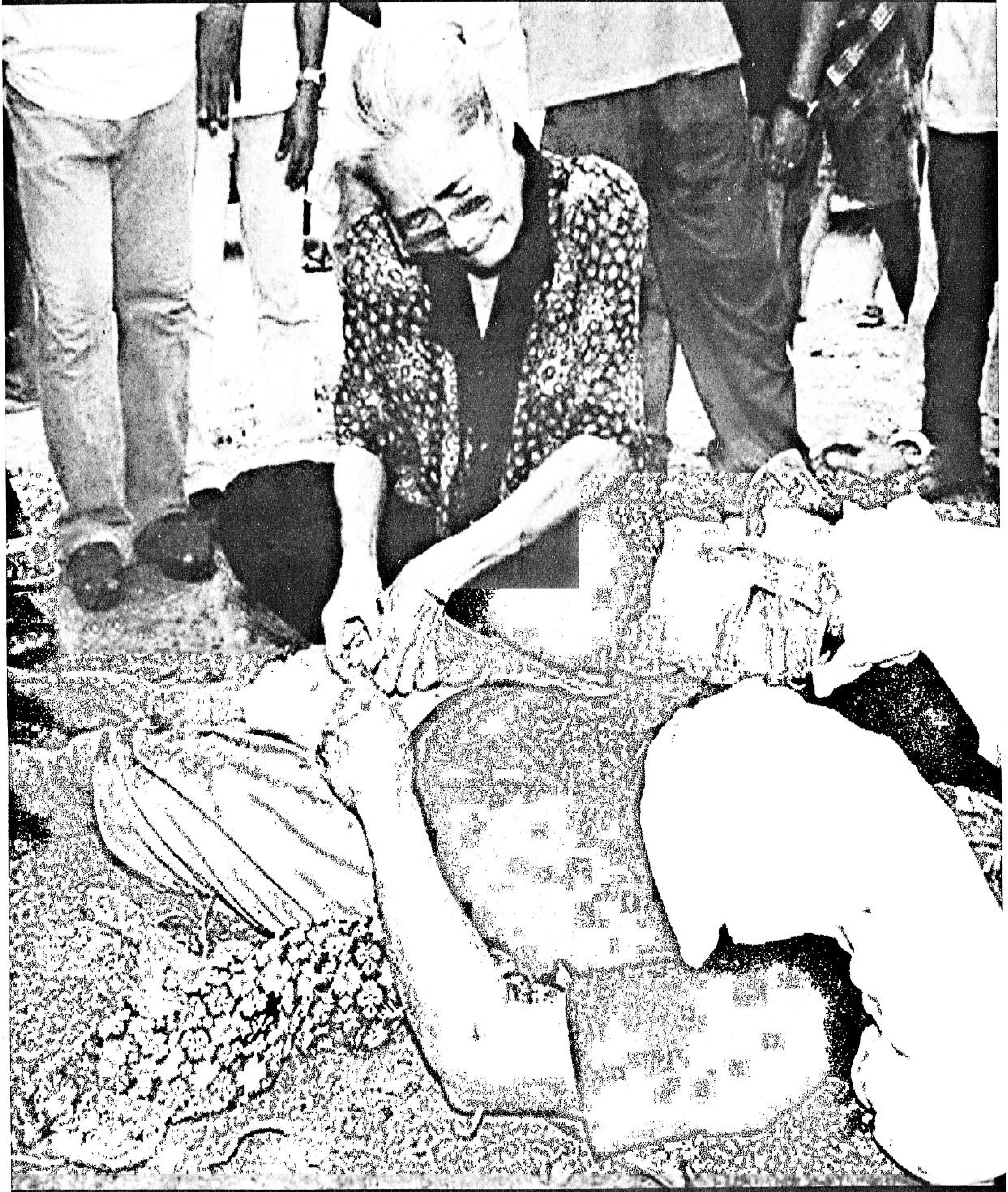
1. File the duly accomplished Registration Form (name, address, TIN and other relevant circumstances to be indicated).
2. Php2,000 00 Registration Fee (Non-Refundable).
3. Php20,000 00 Cash Bond (Refundable)
4. The highest bidder shall be required to pay 50% of the bid price either in cash and/or Manager's Check immediately and the balance of 50% shall be paid within the next business day.
5. After the second failed bidding, a particular lot may be offered to all qualified bidders for negotiated sale, subject to compliance of the requirements under Section IV - J of CMO 5- 2003.
6. Payment by Cashier's/Manager's Checks to the BOC/MICP shall bear the following :
   a. Pay to the order of Land Bank of the Philippines - BOC MICP E.O.
   b. For credit of the Bureau of Customs
   c. For the account of ____________
   Bidder

For further details, please contact Mr. Isidro A. Pre, Chief, Auction & Cargo Disposal Division, MICP, Tel No. 247-09-77

(Sgd.) ATTY. REYNALDO S. NICOLAS
District Collector of Customs

(PDI - May 5. 2004)

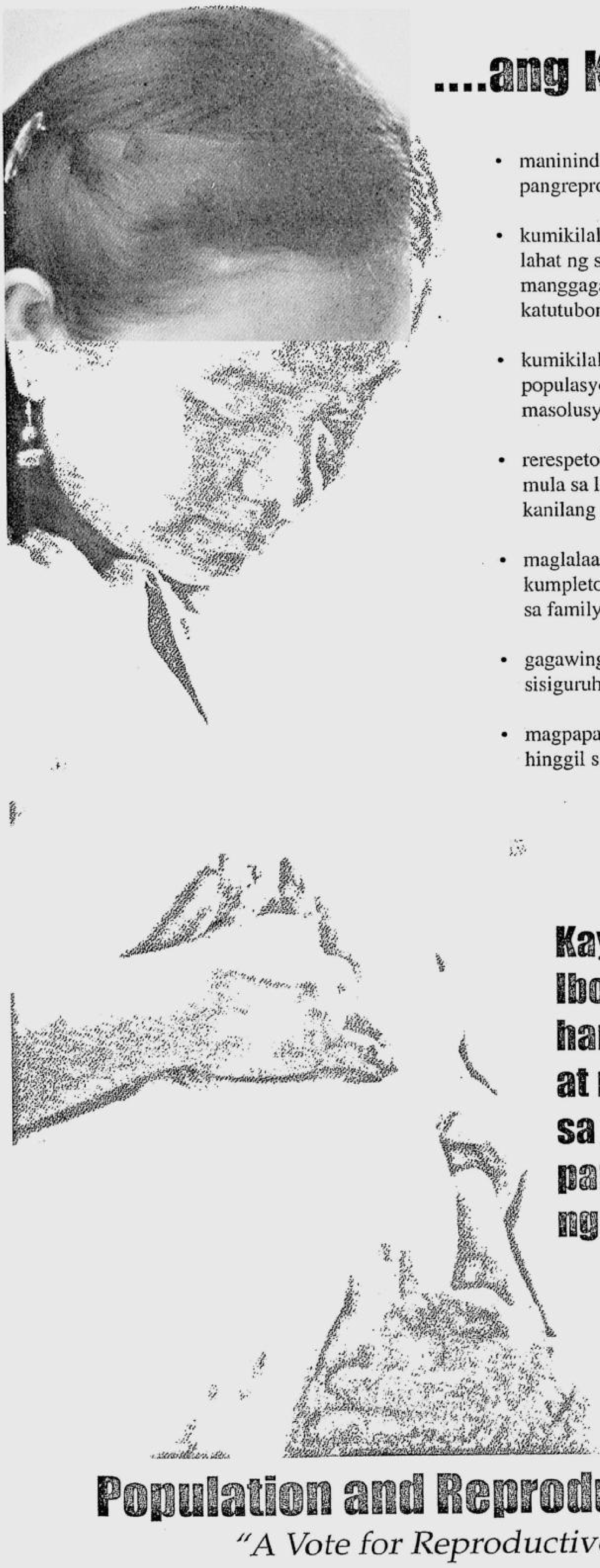
Anim na taon pa?



Palitan na ang gobyerno!

Sa darating na eleksyon,

IBOTO NATIN



....ang Kandidato na:

- maninindigan para sa mga isyu ng populasyon at kalusugang pangreproduktibo.
- kumikilala sa mga usaping ito bilang mga isyu na nakakaapekto sa lahat ng sektor ng lipunan, kabilang ang mga magsasaka, manggagawa, maralitang taga-lunsod, mga may kapansanan, katutubong Pilipino at iba pang sektor.
- kumikilala sa koneksyon ng walang tigil na pagdami ng populasyon at kahirapan at gagawa ng kaukulang aksyon upang masolusyunan ito.
- rerespeto sa karapatan ng mga babae at mga mag-asawa na pumili mula sa lahat ng ligtas at epektibong paraan ng family planning na kanilang nais.
- maglalaan ng pondo ng pamahalaan upang mabigyan ng kumpletong impormasyon at serbisyo ang mga mag-asawa hinggil sa family planning.
- gagawing prayoridad ang kalusugan ng mga kababaihan at sisiguruhing ligtas ang bawat pagbubuntis at panganganak.
- magpapatupad ng programang pang-edukasyon ng mga kabataan hinggil sa sekswalidad.

**Kaya sa darating na eleksyon,
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handang manindigan
at magtaguyod
sa kalusugan at karapatang
pangreproduktibo
ng mga mamamayan.**

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DOLLAR STEADY

Asian stocks off 4-month lows as US Fed meets

SINGAPORE—Asian stocks clambered off four-month lows on Tuesday after mostly upbeat corporate and economic news lifted US shares, as investors braced for a Federal Reserve meeting that could signal an imminent rate rise.

The dollar gained ahead of the meeting, where the US central bank is expected to take another step toward raising interest rates by changing its policy statement to acknowledge robust economic growth.

Oil prices eased a touch, but were still near highs last seen shortly before the 2003 Iraq war.

With Japanese markets closed for the second day of a three-day holiday, an MSCI index of shares elsewhere in the Asia Pacific climbed 1.1 percent by 0620 GMT, reversing Monday's loss that took it to a four-month low.

Shares in the world's third-biggest memory chip maker, South Korea's Hynix Semiconductor Inc., surged 8.2 percent after Merrill Lynch raised its target price for the stock and sources said an equity fund at Citigroup had raised its offer to buy Hynix's non-core chip-making units to over 900 billion won ($768 million).

The dollar held on to gains scored against the euro on Monday after a key manufacturing survey showed inflation pressures building in the economy. That fueled the case for tighter monetary policy in the United States, although the overall report came in below expectations.

"We are looking for a more balanced assessment of inflation risks, some acknowledgement of the improving labor market and, thirdly, some indication that they will not move immediately," said Malcolm, who expected a 25-basis-point hike in August.

"But there is a risk of a move in June if the data continues to come in strong," he said.

The euro was trading at $1.1955 compared with $1.1932 in New York and a high on Monday of around $1.1980. The dollar was also buying 110.43 yen versus 110.26 in New York.

Asian shares took their cue from Wall Street, where shares rose on positive news from companies including Adobe Systems Inc. and generally upbeat data on manufacturing, construction and the semiconductor industry.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index rose 1.2 percent in morning trade. Benchmarks elsewhere were up 0.2 percent in South Korea and 0.3 percent in Australia, 1.7 percent in Singapore and 2.6 percent in Taiwan.

The Dow Jones industrial average climbed 0.9 percent and the Nasdaq Composite added one percent.

Asian shares battered recently by worries over slowing Chinese demand rebounded.

South Korean steel maker POSCO Co. climbed 4.7 percent after losing 11.5 percent in the past five days.

In Australia, St. George Bank gained 7 percent after exceeding market forecasts for its first-half profit and raising its full-year earnings outlook.

US oil fell 0.3 percent to $38.09 a barrel.

Crude jumped on Monday toward a March peak last exceeded in February 2003, before the start of the US-led invasion of Iraq.

Security fears after an attack on a Saudi Arabian refinery overshadowed comments by Opec ministers saying the cartel could maintain or even raise its third-quarter quotas.

Gold was steady at $387.60 an ounce. *Reuters*

Manufacturing activity surged in US, Europe

NEW YORK—Manufacturers around the world, benefiting from a global economic recovery, reported strong growth in April and increases in hiring despite worries about rising costs.

In the United States, growth in factory output slowed slightly in April and the number of workers hired increased, but an index of prices that US factories pay for materials hit a near 25-year high.

Euro zone factories showed their strongest expansion in April in more than three years, casting doubt on whether interest rates will fall any more in the world's second biggest trading bloc.

The European data—minus the UK which is closed for a bank holiday—followed strong figures from Australia and Hong Kong earlier Monday and from Japan last week.

Expansion

In the United States, the Institute for Supply Management said its manufacturing index edged down to 62.4 in April from March's 62.5.

Any reading above 50 shows expansion, and this marked the 11th consecutive month of growth in the US sector.

"This is further confirmation that we're looking at an economy that is doing much better and is on a much more solid footing than before," said David Resler, chief economist with Nomura Securities International in New York.

The employment component of the US index gained for a sixth consecutive month, to 57.8 from 57.0 in March, remaining at its highest level since December 1987.

The prices paid component rose to 88 in April—the highest level since November, 1979—from 86 in March.

In the 12-nation euro zone politicians, particularly in Germany and France, have nagged the European Central Bank in recent months to cut interest rates to boost what seemed at best a laborious recovery from economic stagnation.

Upturn

But the Reuters Eurozone Purchasing Managers' Index seems to support the ECB's contention that rates at 2.0 percent are doing nothing to hinder a gradual if unspectacular upturn.

The index, based on a survey of 3,000 firms, rose to 54 in April from 53.3 the previous month.

That beat the average forecast from economists of 53.6, and was the highest reading since November 2000 at the tail-end of the technology boom.

"It seems the euro zone is benefiting from the global economic recovery," said Chris Williamson, chief economist at NTC Research which compiles the survey for Reuters. *Reuters*

AN AFGHAN boy sits at his stall at a market in Kabul, May 3. The economy of Afghanistan is likely to keep surging ahead over the next few years, provided that international aid flows continue and the security situation improves, according to a major Asian Development Bank report released last week. REUTERS

WB blasts rich world for aid spending

WASHINGTON—World Bank president James Wolfensohn blasted rich nations on Monday for making statements on issues such as poverty, aid or trade to score headlines and then failing to deliver on promises.

Speaking at a World Bank development economics conference, Wolfensohn said none of the Group of Eight rich countries—the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, Canada and Russia—spent a targeted 0.7 percent of their gross national income on foreign aid.

Yet, the world's major governments spent $900 billion on defense, but provide just $60 billion for aid, of which a fraction is in cash, said Wolfensohn, whose organization is charged with leading the global fight against poverty.

"It is the rich countries which go through every year a sort of shadow play at the G8 meetings when Sherpas come around to try and see what it is that can be highlighted that won't cost a lot of money, but which will get a headline," said Wolfensohn, adding: "And I'm not joking about this.

"Then when you dig down for fundamental changes ... Doha (round of trade talks) has not been a huge success so far in terms of agriculture and other opening of trade and aid has hardly been a success."

Sherpas are the senior bureaucrats who set the agendas of summit meetings for their political bosses.

Wolfensohn said tackling poverty should be treated with the same urgency as rebuilding of Iraq or Afghanistan.

World Bank statistics released on April 23 said poverty fell sharply in developing countries in the past 20 years, but huge disparities remain.

It said the proportion of people living in extreme poverty on less than $1 a day dropped by almost half to 21 percent from 40 percent between 1981 and 2001. *Reuters*

Gobal semiconductor sales up 34% in Q1

NEW YORK—Worldwide sales of semiconductors jumped 34 percent in the first quarter compared with the same period a year ago to $48.8 billion, an industry group reported Monday.

Semiconductor Industry Association said that based on the latest figures, it now expects a 20-percent rise in worldwide sales, as corporate spending on new technology appears to be picking up.

Global sales for the January-March quarter grew to $48.8 billion in the first quarter of 2004 compared to $36.4 billion in the first quarter of 2003 and $48.1 billion in the fourth quarter of 2003.

On a monthly basis, the group said sales were $16.28 billion in March, a sequential increase of 4.4 percent from February and a 32.3 percent increase from March of 2003.

"The strong sales in the first quarter are very encouraging," said SIA president George Scalise.

"Based on the strong first-quarter results, it now appears likely that growth for 2004 will exceed 20 percent.

One of the leading drivers of sales growth was continued growth in corporate spending on information technology products ... The fundamentals are in place for continued robust growth in chip sales through the end of the year."

On a regional basis, last month's sales were up 46 percent in the Asia-Pacific region last month compared with a year earlier, with a rise of 25 percent in the Americas, 24 percent in Europe and 25 percent in Japan, the SIA said. *AFP*

US Fed plots end to era of low rates

WASHINGTON—US Federal Reserve policymakers met on Tuesday to plot the beginning of the end for the lowest US official interest rates in 46 years.

Just when the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee will pull the trigger on a rate rise remains unclear but the direction of the US central bank's thinking is not in doubt.

As the economy shows increasing signs of entering a broad-based expansion in which companies can make price hikes stick, policymakers have signaled their readiness to take whatever action is necessary to tamp down potential inflation.

Its only tool for doing so is raising the federal funds rate levied on overnight loans between banks, now at its lowest level since 1958 after 13 cuts since early 2001—the last of them in June last year.

Inflation pressures

"We have to recognize that maintaining the current level of the funds rate for too long will eventually result in an unwelcome increase in inflationary pressures," Fed vice chair Roger Ferguson said in San Francisco a month ago.

The Fed has indicated it would not hesitate to raise rates even though there is a presidential election this November.

Rates were lowered to the current low levels for a mix of reasons—to spur the economy out of the doldrums it entered in 2000, to nurture it past recession and the impact of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, and to shield it from the reaction to corporate scandals and financial market misbehavior.

By most standards, the highly stimulative medicine appears to have worked.

The government reported last week that gross domestic product, which measures the value of all goods and services produced within US borders, grew at a steady 4.2 percent annual rate.

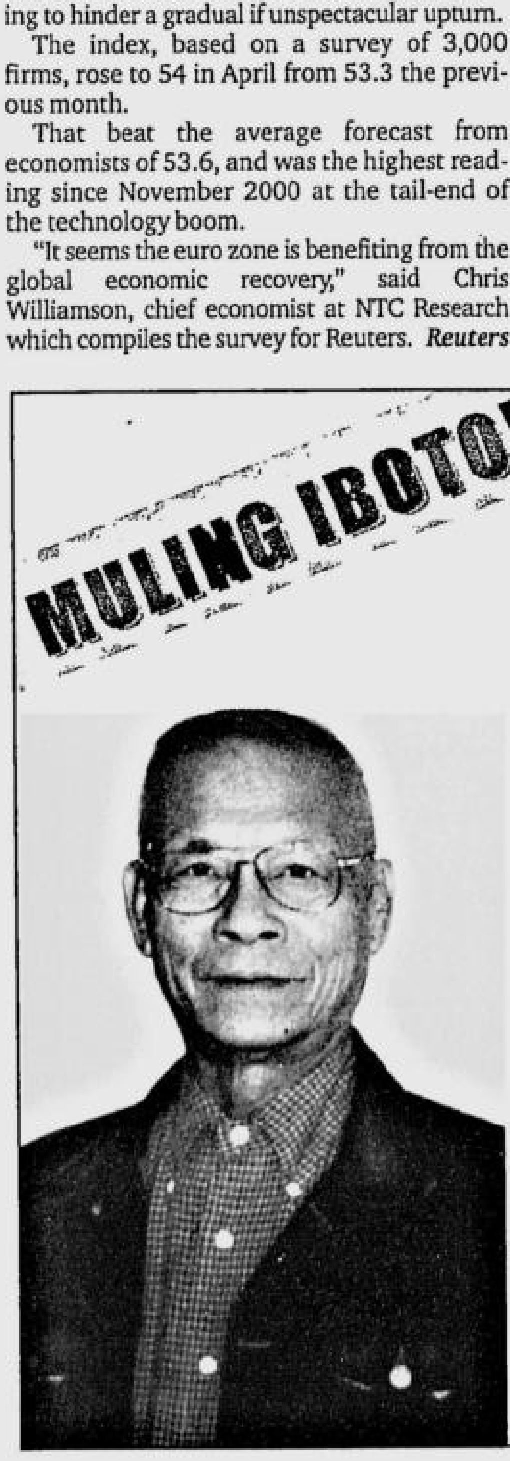
Strong GDP performance

GDP performance over the nine months through March was the strongest in 20 years at an average 5.5 percent a quarter.

With the exception of March, when 308,000 jobs were created, employment has lagged disappointingly, but it may be picking up. Economists forecast a further 173,000 jobs will be reported for April when the Labor Department issues the data on Friday.

Prices have also started to gain strength, at least enough for Fed Chair Alan Greenspan to be able to declare that deflation—the specter of a downward spiral in prices—is dead.

"Threats of deflation, which were a significant concern last year, by all indications, are no longer an issue for us," Greenspan said earlier. *Reuters*



MULING IBOTO!

Kailangan natin ng Kakampi sa Senado:

Senador RODOLFO G.

B I A Z O N

Napatunayan na natin sa mga nagdaang Kongreso ang tatag at puso ni Sen. Biazon. Nanindigan siya para sa mga batas na mag-aangat sa kalidad ng buhay ng mga mamamayan.

Sa susunod na Kongreso, malinaw ang PLATAPORMA ni Sen. Biazon:

- **Kapayapaan sa bansa at pagsisiguro na una ang kaligtasan ng mga mamamayan.** Patuloy na pagreporma sa Hukbong Sandatahan ng Pilipinas (AFP) at Philippine National Police (PNP).
- **Maayos na pabahay ng mga mamamayan, laluna ng mga urban poor.** Maayos na patakaran para sa gamit ng lupa; pabahay para sa lahat ng mga Pilipino; pagpapatupad at pagpapalakas ng mga programa ng pamahalaan sa pabahay.
- **Pagpapalakas ng mga kooperatiba** Pondo at pagpapalakas ng mga kooperatiba laluna sa sektor ng pagsasaka.
- **Seguridad sa mga Pinoy sa usapin ng globalisasyon.** Proteksyon ng ating agrikultura at industriya; safety nets para sa mga mamamayan sa usaping GATT-WTO.
- **Pangangalaga sa kapakanan ng mga kababaihan at pagsisiguro na kasama sila sa pagpapaunlad ng bansa.** Isa sa mga may akda ng mga bagong batas na "Anti-Abuse of Women and their Children" at ng "Anti-Trafficking in Persons." Muling gagawing prinsipal na panukala ang "Reproductive Health Care Act."
- **Pagbibigay pansin sa ugnayan ng walang habas na paglaki ng populasyon at kahirapan.** Gagawing prinsipal na panukala ang "Integrated Population and Development Act."

Malinaw ang rekord ni Sen. Biazon: Kakampi siya ng ordinaryong mamamayan, laluna ng kababaihan.

Kaming mga nakalagda mula sa nakararaming sektor at indibidwal, kasama ng aming kasapian at pamilya, ay nagpapatunay nito. Senador Biazon – may prinsipyo; may pananagutan; maaasahan.

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Huwag sayangin ang inyong boto. Pumili tayo ng sigurado.
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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late BENEDICTO E. MANEBOG has been extrajudicially settled by his heir as Doc. 21 Page 5 Book XIX Series 2004 before Notary Public Atty Wilfredo Albanico of Pasig City.
(PDI - May 5, 12 & 19, 2004)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late MAMERTO SANTOS was extrajudicially settled among his heirs on May 3, 2004 under Deed as Doc. No. 12, Page 66, Book V, Series of 2004 of Notary Public Amado M. Calderon of Marikina City.
(PDI - May 5, 12 & 19, 2004)

PERSONAL

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4 A Person Want 2 Earn P15T or more 8976276-77

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EXPERIENCED BAR SUPERVISOR

- Female
- 25 to 30 yrs. old
- Speak English fluently & Japanese speaking advantage
- Pleasing personality
- College level

Requirements:

- Resumé with certificate of employment
- NBI clearance
- 2x2 ID photo

Interested applicant may call Tel#831-0736 and look for **Monette** or **Gina**, Monday to Saturday between 2 to 6 p.m.

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JOB HIRING 09196913491 VEA

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NOTICE

THE FIRST PHILIPPINE DRAGON CUP

A Dragonboat Racing Competition
To be held at The Baywalk Area,
Roxas Boulevard

Will be held on MAY 15 (SATURDAY) and MAY 16 (SUNDAY)

* This notice was issued with regards to the adjustments made to the dates previously announced.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Science and Technology
PHILIPPINE NUCLEAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE
Address: Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
P.O. Box Nos. 213 U.P. Quezon City;
932 Manila; 1314 Central, Quezon City
Telephone Nos. 929-6010 to 19 Fax No. 920-1646

INVITATION TO APPLY ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) is inviting all interested bidders for our forthcoming public bidding for the following:

1. SECURITY AND RELATED SERVICES FOR CY 2004 (JULY TO DECEMBER) - 15 GUARDS
   Approved Budget is One Million Two Hundred Sixty Thousand Pesos (P1,260,000.00)
2. JANITORIAL AND RELATED SERVICES FOR CY 2004 (JULY - DECEMBER)
   Approved Budget is Eight Hundred Ninety Thousand Six Hundred Ten and 30/100 pesos. (P890,610.00)

Issuance of Eligibility requirements	May 11-12, 2004
Pre-bid conference	May 20, 2004
Bidding	June 3, 2004

For inquiries interested parties may contact the PBAC Secretariat at tel. nos. 929-6011 to 19 loc. 275 (c/o Julie Mendoza).

The Bids and Awards Committee and the Institute reserve the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect thereto, accept bids as may be deemed advantageous thereto or postpone the bidding for whatever cause it may deem proper.

In case of failure, a re-bidding shall automatically be scheduled five (5) calendar days after the announcement of failed bidding at the same time and place as the first bidding.

(Sgd.) ALUMANDA M. DELA ROSA, Ph.D.
Director

(PDI May 5 2004)

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Mortuary and Crematory opening soon!

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate

❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments

In Loving Memory

On the Thirty Third Death Anniversary of

DR. BIENVENIDO B. ERAÑA

Holy Masses will be offered tomorrow, Thursday, May 6, 2004 at the following churches:

MINOR BASILICA OF THE BLACK NAZARENE .... 6:00 AM
Parish of St. John the Baptist, Quiapo, Manila
MARY THE QUEEN PARISH, GREENHILLS .... 6:00 AM
San Juan, Metro Manila
DIVINE WORD MISSION SEMINARY (Christ the King) .... 6:30 AM
E. Rodriguez, Sr. Blvd., Quezon City
SHRINE OF MARY, QUEEN OF PEACE (Our Lady of EDSA) ..... 6:30 AM
EDSA cor. Ortigas Avenue, Quezon City
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL PARISH, *San Marcelino, Manila* .... 6:30 AM
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH .... 7:00 AM
Lantana, Cubao, Quezon City
SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE, *Greenhills, Mandaluyong* .... 7:15 AM
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH, *Pinaglabanan, San Juan* .... 7:15 AM
BASILICA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
(Manila Metropolitan Cathedral), *Intramuros, Manila* .... 7:30 AM
SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO, *Forbes Park, Makati* .... 7:30 AM
STA. CRUZ PARISH, *Sta. Cruz, Manila* .... 8:00 AM
MT. CARMEL SHRINE, *J. Rodriguez, New Manila, Quezon City* ..... 6:00 AM

We, his family, request relatives, friends and the pious readers to join us in our prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

AUREA (AURING) GUMTANG DUMLAO

Retired Public Schools Teacher, Paoay, Ilocos Norte

Peacefully joined our Creator on May 3, 2004 at the age of 83.

Her bereaved husband **Ret. Asst. Supt. Bienvenido B. Dumlao**; children **Efren & Gloria Blanco, Edgar (†) & Edith Dimaandal, Noemi & Art Menchavez**; grandchildren **Gary & Janet, Carlo, Ella, Eimee, Eirene, Mark, Dean & Armi**; great grandchildren **Paolo, Gabriel, Rafael & Paula** request the readers to join them in praying for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the Marian Memorial Chapels, Inc., Marcos Highway, Antipolo City.

Cremation will take place on Sunday, May 9, 2004, 10:00 a.m. at La Funeraria Paz, Quezon City after the 7:30 a.m. Mass at Marian Chapels.

Interment will follow at Twin Hearts Parish Ossuarium, West Triangle, Quezon City.

ATTY. CRISPIN C. GONZALES

Former Regional Election Supervisor

was called home to the Lord on May 3, 2004 at the age of 71.

He shall be missed by his dearest wife **JOSEFINA GONZALES**; children **MA. CRISTINA, EDWIN CRISPIN, MELVYN, ALLAN LESLIE, HANSEL GLENN**; grandchildren **DANA MARI, RALPH ALAN & JOHN PAOLO.**

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment to be announced later.

"I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies, and whoever believes in Me will never die." — John 11:25-26

Petra Noche Dimailig

of Odiongan, Romblon

Peacefully joined her Creator, her husband Timoteo Dimailig and her son Salvador N. Dimailig at 7:30 a.m. on May 4, 2004 at the age of 97.

Her loving children **Perla D. Santillan** and **Norma D. Divierte**; grandchildren **Brando & Cindy Dimailig, Jay Dimailig, Drs. Anna & Raymond David, Mike Dimailig, Paolo & Fatima Dimailig, Nennette & Vincent Santillan, Jun-Jun & Dra. Liza Divierte, Dra. Espe Divierte**; great grandchildren **Kyle Dimailig, John Daniel Divierte & James Gabriel Divierte**, relatives and friends, will fondly remember and miss her and request the pious readers to pray for her eternal rest and everlasting happiness.

Her remains lie in state at Sanctuario de San Pedro Bautista Mortuary Chapel, located at San Pedro de Bautista St., San Francisco Del Monte, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 15, 2004 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park,San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Sanctuario de San Pedro Bautista Mortuary Chapel.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

LYDIA DE LA TORRE-SEGOVIA

Died peacefully on May 2, 2004 at the age of 85.

Children: **Melvyn, Vina & Art, Edgar & Ging, Letty & Danny, Nono & Baby**; grandchildren & relatives request to pray for the repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on May 6, Thursday, at the Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Quezon City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites interested suppliers who are (a) duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietors; or (b) 60% Filipino-owned Partnership/Corporations; or (c) two or more suppliers forming into joint ventures jointly and severally liable; or (d) cooperatives duly registered with the CDA; with largest single contract, similar to the items for bid, for the last 2 years, at least equal to 50% of the approved budget; and with Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) at least equal to the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

ITB No.	Item/Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2004-097	90 units Ethernet Hub (10/100 Switch Hub)	P 1,415,205.00	LBP Funds
	90 units RSD-1 Digital Sharing Device or equivalent	P 1,591,875.00	LBP Funds
	300 units Synchronous Modem	P 471,201.00	LBP Funds
	210 units 2.0 KVA Automatic Voltage Regulator (AVR)	P 693,000.00	LBP Funds
	30 rolls Belden Ethernet Cable Cat-5	P 77,385.00	LBP Funds
2004-099	30 units 6 KVA Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS)	P 6,000.000.00	LBP Funds

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on June 2, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. and the Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila.

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on May 18, 2004, at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to the Qualification/Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Only those bidders who comply with the Bank's requirements shall be eligible to participate in the bidding.

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any defect or informality and to accept bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

COMMITTEE ON BIDS AND AWARDS

Summer TEXTravaganza

FOODPARK'S Summer TEXTravaganza SMS Promo.

Dine at any Foodpark outlets: Foodpark @ The Enterprise Center, Food Odyssey @ LKG Tower, Food & Art Galerie @ GT Tower, Marketplace @ Times Plaza Manila, and Food Park @ the Shell Gas Station, Mexico Pampanga from April 12 - May 29 and get a chance to win exciting prizes including trips to Boracay, Palawan, Bohol and overnight accommodations in Metro Manila!

Keep on dining and texting for more chances of winning.

Summer TEXTravaganza is co-presented by Club Panoly, Club Noah Isabelle, Island Cove, Discovery Suites and sponsored by Monte Vista Resorts, Asian Spirit, Subic International Hotel, Rajah Tours Philippines, Golden Sky Travel and Tours, Manila Bulletin, The Daily Tribune and Mellow Touch 94.7.

INVITATION TO BID
83 Bales Raw Cotton
(water damaged)
May 7, 2004
2:00 p.m. @ MASCO office
For particulars, pls. contact:
Willy Solicito or Dodie Manalo
@ MASCO- 7543581/8130719

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBLITY AND TO BID

The Bids and Awards Committee - Head Office, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites BSP/G-EPS registered companies/contractors and other interested suppliers to a public bidding for one (1) lot PC Maintenance and Management consisting of the following total solution components:

1. Cabling
2. Asset Management Services
3. Change Management for PC hardware and software
4. Call Center and End-User Support Services
5. Hardware Maintenance and Support
6. Anti-Virus Support Services
7. Hardware Preventive Maintenance

Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC): P10M per annum

Contract Term: One (1) year with option to renew up to two (2) years

Bid documents are available from 28 April 2004 to 11 May 2004 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00 at the following address:

BAC Secretariat
Rm. 212, 2nd Floor, 5-Storey Building
cor. A. Mabini and P. Ocampo Sr. Sts., Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos(s): 524-8718/523-1321

Pre-bid Conference Date and Time: 12 May 2004 at 10:00 a.m.
Bidding Date and Time. 25 May, 2004 not later than 10:00 a.m.
Place. Room MR2A, 2nd Floor, 5-storey Building, BSP Main Complex, Malate, Manila

Interested bidders shall submit not later than the bidding date and time the following documents in three (3) separate envelopes:

Envelope No. 1:

1. Articles of Incorporation and Business Registration Papers;
2. Y2003 Audited Financial Statements (Income Statement & Balance Sheet);
3. Y2003 Income Tax Return;
4. Taxpayer's Identification Number;
5. Valid and current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License;
6. Prospective bidder's computation for its Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be at least equal to the ABC, duly signed by the authorized signing official and supported with pertinent documents, i.e., financial statements and copies of on-going project contracts, or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend to it a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid, or a cash deposit certificate in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC. The NFCC shall be computed as follows: NFCC = [(Current Assets - Current Liabilities) (K)] minus value of all outstanding projects; K = 20 ;
7. Duly notarized statement that the firm is not blacklisted from bidding in any Government Office, Agnecy, Corporation;
8. Letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative to verify any or all of the documents submitted for eligibility check;
9. Duly notarized certification by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative that each of the documents submitted is an original copy of a true and faithful reproduction or copy of the original,
10. Partnership and alliances related to the proposal; any other significant partnerships and alliances that may be unrelated to the proposal; and list of partners and services they provide,
11. Company's quality control methods and any industry standards/certifications utilized in the provision of services;
12. Certification as to the number of years the company has been offering these services;
13. List of reference sites and a list of successful installations or projects of equivalent complexity, environment and volume, with at least one (1) year implementation experience with the vendor providing the proposed services (complete with contact name, address and telephone/fax numbers);
14. Description of key factors and components that differentiate the company's offering in the marketplace; and
15. List of personnel supporting the services indicating the following information:
    - Hardware and software support capabilities
    - Years of experience
    - Certification achieved

Envelope No. 2:

1 Instructions to Bidders
2. Certification of Compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the bidding
3. Original Bid Security
4. Implementation Plan

Envelope No. 3:

Price Proposal

All envelopes shall be dropped in the bid box located at Room MR2A. LATE BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

The BSP assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation

(Sgd.) WILFREDO B. DOMO-ONG
Vice-Chairman

(PDI--May 5, 2004)

COMELEC ADVISORY

FINDP <space> LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, MIDDLE NAME OR INITIAL, birthday (month-day-year)

Send to GLOBE	-	**2958**
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People, Events & Products
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aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Aries Espinosa

Summer workshops at The Podium

MORE than just being a hobby store, Landes will be treating kids to Fun Summer Workshops on May 8 from 2 to 5 p.m. at The Podium's Lounge Area.

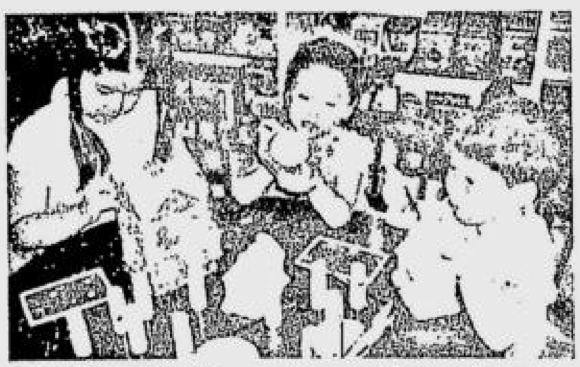
Kids can learn arts and crafts like Ceramic Painting, Scrapbooking, Sculpey, Collage, and Think-a-do-all perfect for bonding with family members and friends. Here's what they can look forward to during the sessions:

KIDS will definitely create fun with the Ceramic Painting activity.

Ceramic Painting. Kids can paint and decorate their own ceramic plates, mugs, jars, and vases using non-toxic and food safe paints. They can also pick out materials like stencils from Landes that will help enhance their personal masterpiece.

Scrapbooking. Keeping memories can be both fun and creative with scrapbooking-arranging and preserving photographs, memorabilia, and a journal on a scrapbook. Scrapbooking is ageless, artistic, and versatile because you can use practically anything from paper to, stickers to buttons to ribbons, and even metal to document your memories. It is also a great way for both kids and adults to appreciate their life experiences and express their creative talents.

Sculpey. Another cool way to create. Sculpeys are non-toxic clays and modeling materials that work and feel like ceramic clays but won't dry out when exposed to air. The best part is that in sculpting, possibilities are endless as these come in 90 fun colors.



ACCESSORIZE and personalize your things with Landes Think-A-Do activity.

Collage. Working on collages is one way families can get together and make lasting memories. Basic projects include treasure boxes, collage frames, and keepsake boxes that are both inspiring and easy to decorate. These papier mache and wooden materials are not only perfect for painting, but develop creativity, dexterity, and confidence.

Think-a-Do. Not only arts and crafts, this encourages imagination, creativity, and individuality. Everyday things like clothes are transformed into personal statements with buttons, pins and other arts and crafts materials. These also make unique gifts with a personal touch.

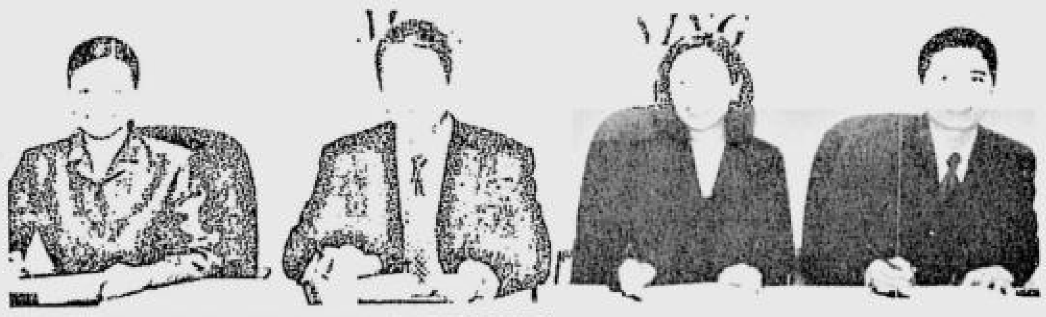
And while you're at The Podium, do drop by the Landes store and check out its hobby stuff. Groups definitely won't get bored with board games like Boardwalk and the mystery game Clue, and limited editions of Monopoly. Test your brain power at the Brain Bender section, and see how you can solve mind bending puzzles such as Rush Hour, Flip It!, and Block by Block. Explore the wonders of science with a microscope, a telescope, lab sets, and animal and human anatomical models.

Landes also has a Theo's Café in its store so you can have your snacks while having fun.

Summer Fun Workshops by Landes at The Podium is also made possible by Jam 88.3 and Wave 89.1.

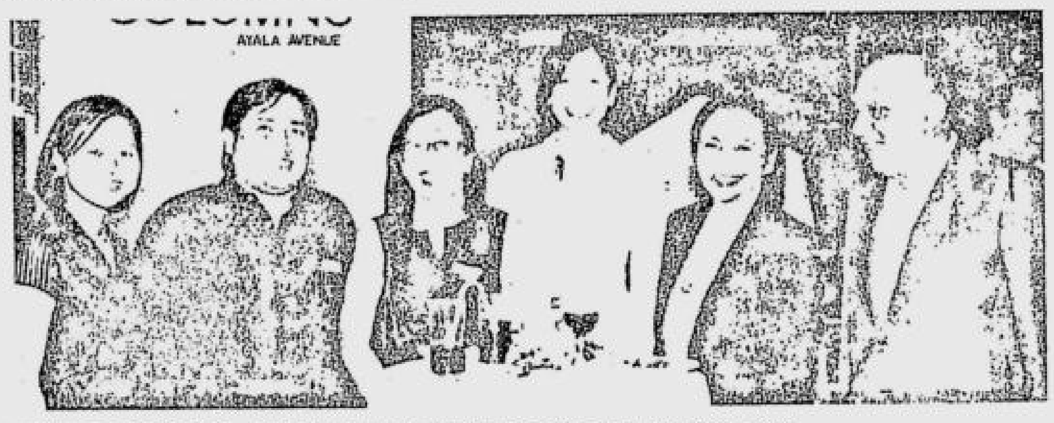
FIBISCO DISCOUNT PROMO

Fibisco Biscuits, manufactured by Commonwealth Foods Inc, and Cardinal Ceramics, makers of world-class porcelain, join forces for a special discount promo from Feb. 16 to May 15. Shown (from left) are Louella B. Reyes, store manager of Cardinal Ceramics Factory Store, Francis Infante, president and general manager of Kama, Kusina At Iba Pa, Grace H. Mercado, marketing services manager of Commonwealth Foods Inc and Juvel P. Katigbak, account supervisor of Image Dimensions.



PLDT, AMERICAN EXPRESS SIGN MOA

PLDT and American Express recently signed a memorandum of agreement on the provisioning of American Express' data (international and domestic) and voice network requirements. Shown are, from left, Kat Luna, PLDT Convergence 1 business head, Eric R. Alberto, PLDT SVP and corporate business head, Noemi Azura, AmEx Bank country sales head, and Ramoncito Serrano, AmEx Bank-Makati branch manager.



THE COLUMNS, AYALA AVENUE TOWER 3 LAUNCHED

With two towers sold out and the last tower of The Columns, Ayala Avenue now in the market, Community Innovations Inc gathered a mirthful mix of excited buyers and guests during the recent sales launch of Tower 3 at the Greenbelt 3 Park. CII, an Ayala Land subsidiary, offers The Columns, Ayala Avenue for young urban achievers who seek great location with the prestigious Ayala Avenue address, full 'vertical village' amenities, flexible and affordable pricing and the Ayala Land pedigree. Shown during the party are, from left, CII property specialist May Emlano, Bien and Arleen Perez of South China Morning Post and LG Philips, Hong Kong, respectively, Grace Manankil Sta. Ana, CII project development officer, Ruby Villavicencio Paurom, RubyComm principal consultant, and a client. For inquiries, call 750-0471 or 750-0484, e-mail cii-sales@ayalaland.com.ph, or visit www.communityinnovations.com.ph. Model units are available for viewing at the 3rd floor Glorietta.

UP ICW WRITERS' WEEK A SUCCESS

The UP Institute of Cr6eative Writing (ICW, formerly known as the Creative Writing Center), recently celebrated its 25th year with the Writers' Week, which culminated with the Writers' Night at the UP Executive House. The Writers' Night was sponsored by Smart Communications in cooperation with EMI Philippines, Media G8way Corp Inc, NafNaf and red earth of Cinderella Marketing Corp, De La Salle University Press and Popeye's. The other sponsors were Zen Zest Lifestyle Products, Guerilla Wear, Anvil Publishing, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Giraffe Books, Somo's Caterers, Kitaro, Chateau Verde, and Rodic's Diner. Shown are the fellows of the ICW celebrating the success of the Writers' Week, clockwise from top right, ICW director Vim Nadera and associates Anton Juan, Josephine Barrios, Amelia Lapena-Bonifacio (concurrently UP System VP-public affairs), Jose Y. Dalisay Jr, associate Domingo Landicho and deputy director Ruby Gamboa-Alcantara

Managing diabetes effectively with 2-in-1 drug

ERNIE Q is a bank executive who has been battling diabetes for 10 years now. All these years, he has been prescribed several medicines to manage his ailment and its complications.

Like many diabetics, Ernie is hoping for a cure. Cognizant that diabetes is a chronic disease which involves long-term treatment, he is willing to try a breakthrough pill.

Many diabetics are not aware that the use of an effective medicine is very essential in the management of diabetes. Failure to manage it may result in serious damage to the eyes, kidneys and heart.

According to the landmark United Kingdom Prospective Diabetes Study, approximately half of patients who are on metformin or other older antidiabetes drugs, eventually need some type of combination therapy to effectively manage their disease.

A drug that controls type 2 diabetes has been developed by GlaxoSmithKline, one of the largest research-based companies in the world.

The drug is the first therapy to combine rosiglitazone and metformin, each working in distinct ways in the body to manage type 2 diabetes. Metformin works primarily on the liver to lower the blood sugar level, while rosiglitazone directly targets insulin resistance, a major underlying cause of type 2 diabetes. Mixing the complementary treatment provides superior long-term blood sugar level control in patients with type 2 diabetes.

The drug got the stamp of Health Canada and many health authorities worldwide.

"At the end of 2003, the Canadian Diabetes Association will issue updated clinical practice guidelines that further stress the importance of tight glycemic control," said Donna Lillie, national director, research and professional education, Canadian Diabetes Association, adding "achieving and maintaining control of blood sugar levels is the key to preventing the complications associated with diabetes."

The rosiglitazone-metformin combination is indicated as an adjunct to diet and exercise, to reduce insulin resistance and improve blood sugar control in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus when diet, exercise and metformin or rosiglitazone alone do not result in adequate blood sugar control. Patients are reminded that this medicine, along with other antidiabetic agents, is a prescription drug and should only be bought upon doctor's advice.

Diabetes, the sixth highest cause of death by disease in the United States, strikes an estimated 16 million Americans-90 to 95 percent of whom have type 2 diabetes. Worldwide, the International Federation of Diabetes estimates that there are 151 million people currently living with diabetes. The number of diabetics worldwide is predicted to increase up to 300 million by 2025.

Patients with type 2 diabetes should consult their doctors to learn more about new treatments that could potentially put a stop to progression of their disease.

PAWS Anima Rehabilitat

BAYER DONATES TO PAWS

The mission of the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) to promote public awareness on the proper and humane treatment of animals recently got a big boost from Bayer Philippines Inc. The global pharmaceutical company, in line with its commitment to support animal welfare organizations like PAWS, recently donated Bay-O-Pet grooming and hygiene products through its animal health division. Shown is Dr. Alberto Milani, Bayer HealthCare-Animal Health general manager Asean, turning over a Bay-O-Pet donation to Oscar Lei, PAWS director, joined by Joe Tolentino, Bayer HealthCare-Animal Health segment manager-hobby, at the society's center for stray and abandoned animals in Katipunan, Quezon City.

The Mavericks behind Joya

JOYA, Rockwell Land Corp's newest residential development, comes alive under the masterful direction of a dream team of the finest interior designers and landscape architects.

Interior designer extraordinaire Guillermo "Butch" Valdez, formerly of Texeira, California works hand in hand with seasoned architectural and design consultant Arlen De Guzman to create a perfect combination of traditional and contemporary design that is unique to Joya's main lobby, club room and other common areas.

Alice Erfe, known for quite a number of exceptional designs found in Manila's top five-star hotels, oversees the fixture, furniture and interior procurement.

Landscape architects Joaquin "Jacko" Zialcita (JM Zialcita) and John Nartowicz (LACC International) round out the design team. These two key figures work in close collaboration to provide a lush setting of flora and fauna that would speak volumes of Joya's elegance and style.

By and large, these five talented and highly skilled artists enhance the natural beauty of space and light that Architect Willie V. Coscolluela and the team of engineers provide Joya's plans, structure and systems design.

Rockwell Land Corp remains true to form by commissioning these five "mavericks" to create another top-notch real estate development at Rockwell Center.

For more information about Joya at Rockwell, you can visit the website at www.e-rockwell.com or call 890-6888.

Bits & Clips

Child road safety program

THE "JACK 'n Jill Chiz Curls" experience, which, for decades has played a significant part in many a child's growing up years, has now been passed on to a whole new generation of kids. And this summer, Jack 'n Jill has taken the Chiz Curls fun a step further with an enjoyable and educational activity dubbed as Safe City Tour Summer Edition. The Safe City Tour is a Child Road Safety program that offers edutainment for kids three to 10 years old, as well as their families, via a puppet show, series of games and exciting treats. During this activity, kids will meet Curlette, the carefree mascot of Jack 'n Jill Chiz Curls; Kuya Ony, the animated ventriloquist/storyteller; and Mr. Safety, the delightful Road Safety Hero. The ongoing shows staged by Cats EYE Events will run through until the first week of May. On May 8 it will be at Kids at Work, SM Bacoor, 4 p.m.

Greenhills exhibit

ANTIQUE collectors are always in search for rare and special wares. They collect old objects to show their veneration for their beauty and historical importance. Henry G. Babiera, a top antique and art dealer, has constructed in Davao City the biggest antique showroom in the country. Mana Casa de Artes y Antiguos' collection is the result of many years of effort. Mana is Babiera's outfit that specializes in arts and antiques. Antique collectors can visit Mana during the 1st Philippine Antiques Show back-to-back with the 1st Floriade Manila starting May 7 at the Greenhills Shopping Complex. Organizer is Prime Asia Trade Planners and Convention Organizers (Patepco). Call 820-3862 or 829-3195.

PILAPIL

21K champ

MARYJOY Pilapil, a member of the Amoranto Runners Club, is the champion of the 21K Marathon Runners running club's 21st anniversary run April 25.

Cargo security, ISPS briefing

TWO SINGAPORE-based experts lead the lineup of speakers to the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code briefing being conducted by logistics and transportation publication PortCalls on May 6 at the Hyatt Regency Manila. The half-day briefing (7 a.m. to 1 p.m.) aims to provide an understanding of the ISPS Code, an International Maritime Organization (IMO) initiative that has far ranging effects on the cargo community. The briefing will identify the commercial advantages of ISPS Code compliance, and what affected sectors need to accomplish before the Code is implemented July 2004. Col. Michael Chen, CEO of ST Education and Training Pte Ltd and consultant of IMO, will talk about the challenges of implementing the Code. Nick Sansom will present a paper on the business risk and insurance impact of the Code.

E-mail: pr [illegible]pop@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

People, Events & Products

Summer workshops at The Podium

MORE than just being a hobby store, Landes will be treating kids to Fun Summer Workshops on May [illegible] from 2 to 5 p.m. at The Podium's Lounge Area.

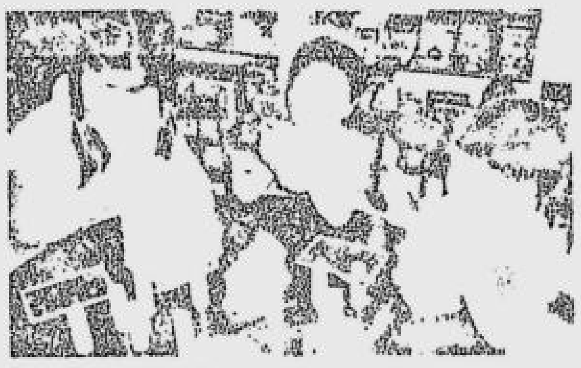
Kids can learn arts and crafts like Ceramic Painting, Scrapbooking, Sculpey, Collage and Think-[illegible] perfect for bonding with family members and friends. Here's what they can look forward to during the sessions.

KIDS will definitely [illegible] reate [illegible] Painti[illegible] activity.

Ceramic Painting. Kids can paint and decorate [illegible] own ceramic plates, mugs, jars, and vases using non toxic and food safe paints. They can also pic[illegible] out materials like stencils from Landes that will help enhance their personal masterpiece.

Scrapbooking. Keeping memories can be both [illegible] and creative with scrapbooking-arranging and preserving photographs, memorabilia, and a journal [illegible] scrapboo[illegible] Scrapbooking is ageless, artistic, and versatile because you can use practically [illegible] om paper to stickers to buttons to ribbon[illegible] and [illegible] metal to document your memories. It [illegible] way [illegible] both kids and adults to ap[illegible] nd express their cre[illegible]

[illegible] way to create. Sculpeys are [illegible] ing materials that work and [illegible] dry out when exposed [illegible] ulpting, possibilities are endless as these come in 90 fun colors [illegible].



ACCESSORIZE and personalize your things [illegible] Think-A-Do activity.

Collage. Working on collages is one way [illegible] can get together and make lasting memori[illegible]. Basi[illegible] projects include treasure boxes, collage frame[illegible] keepsake boxes that are both inspiring [illegible] decorate. These papier mache and wooden [illegible] als are not only perfect for pain[illegible] lop creativity, dexterity, and confidence.

Think-a-Do. Not only arts and crafts, this encourages imagination, creativity, and individuality. Everyday things like clothes are transformed into personal statements with buttons, pins and other arts and crafts materials. These also make unique gifts with a personal touch.

And while you're at The Podium, do drop by the Landes store and check out its hobby stuff. Groups definitely won't get bored with board games like Boardwalk and the mystery game Clue, and limited editions of Monopoly. Test your brain power at the Brain Bender section, and see how you can solve mind bending puzzles such as Rush Hour, Flip It!, and Block by Block. Explore the wonders of science with a microscope, a telescope, lab sets, and animal and human anatomical models.

Landes also has a Theo's Café in its store [illegible] you can have your snacks while having fun.

Summer Fun Workshops by Landes at The Podium is also made possible by Jam 88.3 and Wave 89.1.

FIBISCO DISCOUNT Pr[illegible]

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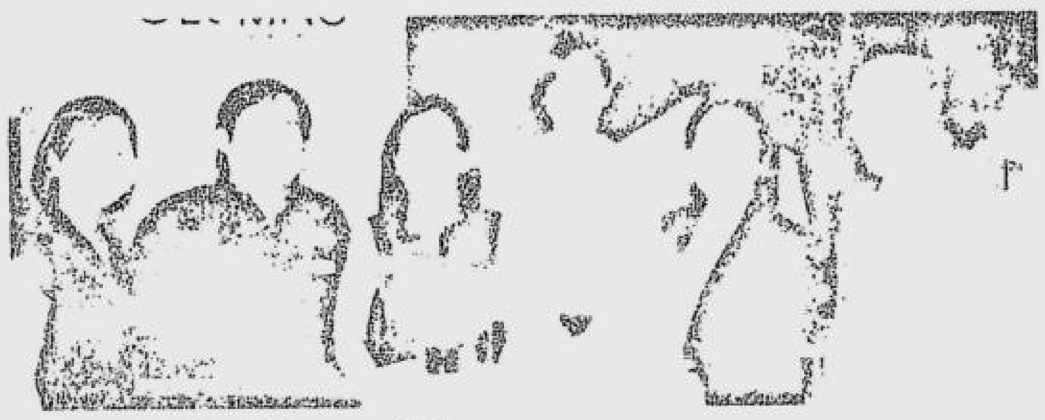

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Managing diabetes effectively with 2-in-1 drug

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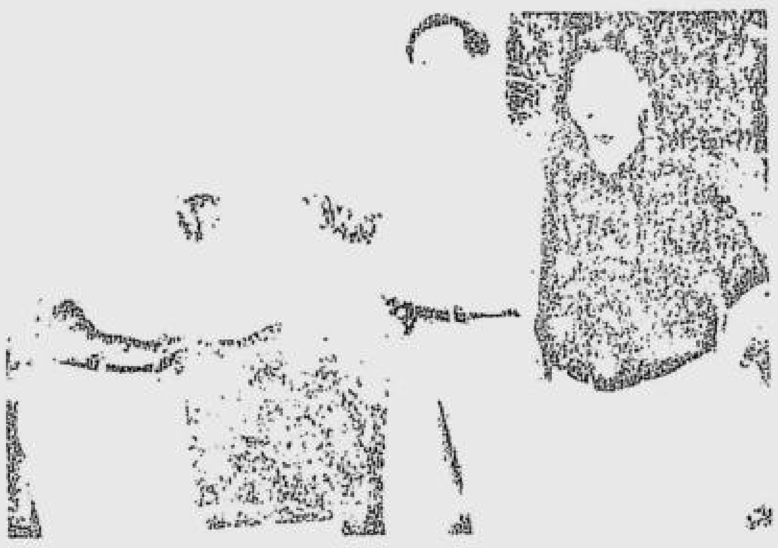

BAYER DONATES TO PAWS

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The Mavericks behind Joya

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Landscape architects Joaquin [illegible] Zalcita (JM Zialcita) and John Nartowi[illegible] (LACC International) round out the de[illegible] team. These two key figures work [illegible] close collaboration to provide a [illegible] ting of flora and fauna that would speak volumes of Joya's elegance and style.

By and large, these five talented and highly skilled artists enhance the natural beauty of space and light that Architect Willie V. Coscolluela and the team of en[illegible] provide Joya [illegible] systems design.

Rockwell Land Corp remain[illegible] form by commissioning these five [illegible] to create another top-notch [illegible] tate development at Rockwell Cente[illegible]

For more information about Joy[illegible] Rockw[illegible] website [illegible] www[illegible] 90-6[illegible]

Clips

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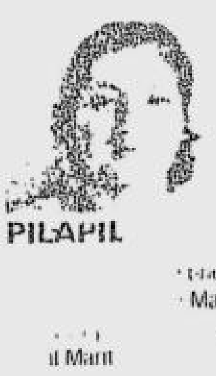

PILAPIL

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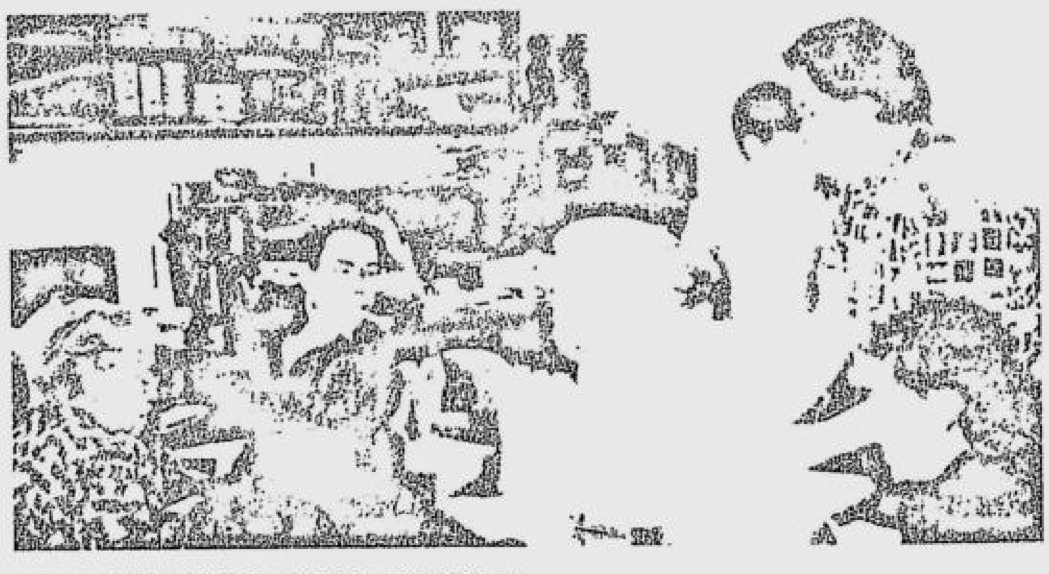
Cargo security, ISPS briefing

TWO SINGAPORE-based experts lead the [illegible] speakers [illegible] the International Ship and Port [illegible] training [illegible] logistics and transportation [illegible] at the Hyatt Rege[illegible] Manila. The half-day briefing [illegible] of the ISPS [illegible] de[illegible] inten[illegible] far ranging effects [illegible] identify [illegible] advantage [illegible] accomplish before the [illegible] Mic[illegible] of S[illegible] Educatio[illegible] [illegible] IMI[illegible] out the challenges of implementing th[illegible] [illegible] paper [illegible] risk and [illegible]



UP ICW WRITERS' WEEK A SUCCESS

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Time off from work

IT was his first time at the beach. He gazed out at the blue expanse before him: the waves lapping up the shore, the boats in the horizon and without hesitation, he pulled off his shirt. He was determined to conquer this blue sea.

Oh, to be two years old and fearless.

It was not her first time at the beach. She gazed out at the blue expanse before her—it stretched farther than she had remembered. There were no buoys to define the stretch safe for swimmers and without hesitation, she pulled away and took shelter in the nearest hut. She was determined to get just the right tan to show off after her day by the sea.

Oh, to be almost fourteen and clueless.

It was our New Year resolution to spend more time at the beach. Still, it took an act of Herculean will to simply pull out of our weekly routine, and all that bind us to work and city life, just to get the kids out and gaze at this blue expanse. When we didn't have kids yet, we were beach bums, we scuba dived, snorkeled, and sunbathed, but today, we were filled with hesitation. Was the sun too harsh for my toddler? How deep was the water? Could there be jellyfish? Would teenage boys lure the daughter away? What other dangers lurked by the sea?

Oh, to be forty and hopeless.

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara

There's an invisible line we cross when we become parents. We stop pushing relentlessly and start balancing compulsively. There is suddenly so much to weigh, so much to consider before we can move forward. There is, of course, the work-life balance, the seesaw we have devoted so much of this column to figure out.

But there are other balancing acts, too, those that have to do with balancing the different needs and expectations of our kids at different ages: one that needs to explore and another that needs to cocoon. The balancing act of the different seasons of the year: making sure that vacation time is just as activity-packed as school time. The balancing act of being both friend and authority figure in your child's life: the line between being your daughter's confidante and being her watchdog. The balancing act of being the staunchest believer in your kids and also the most sensitive to their weaknesses: the line between being the cheerleader and being the reality check.

Invisible line

We don't think much about these trapeze acts we do everyday. After crossing into parenthood, we just move from one spot to the next, swaying, swinging, and using all our might to stay upright. But it is necessary to summon your own Herculean will to pull back, stare at the great expanse before you, and observe the boats and ships that cross your horizon.

Taking stock

What will allow us to do all the balancing acts that we have to do? It's the ability to look up once in a while, take stock, and look at your life as if you are gazing at it for the first time. Observe what makes you courageous, what makes you purpose-driven, and go towards that shoreline. If the life you lead now doesn't bring out the hope, fearlessness, and passion in you, then it's time to re-assess.

We might be so intent on our balancing acts, so focused on simply getting from one point to another, that we forget to enjoy the courage of the fearless two-year-old, the innocence of our clueless thirteen-year-old, and the lingering hope in the hopeless forty-year-old.

(*An Mercado-Alcantara is founding editor of Working Mom magazine published by ABS-CBN Publishing, Inc. For more tips on how to strike work-life balance, check out this month's issue with Charlene Gonzalez on the cover. You may write to her at* an_alcantara@abs.pinoycentral.com.)

How to put faith to work

By Joel Garfinkle

WHETHER the objective is find their dream job or love their jobs more, most people misinterpret faith as simply believing that something totally unforeseen will miraculously happen to them to improve their lives based upon misplaced "hope" in the future. Even worse, some individuals use faith as a disengaging excuse to procrastinate by internalizing a mentality such as "I hope that things work out for me," or "Things will get better for me tomorrow."

However, these philosophies relegate the empowering attributes of hope and faith into nothing more than dumb luck. Unlike the above external definition, I believe faith is internal and rather than materializing somewhere down the road, faith starts fully grounded in the present. In other words, you have the power to control your life in your current circumstances and what you do or create today, ultimately, impacts your destiny.

In order to better help you distinguish the inherent differences between internal and external based faith, let's take a look at two real life examples. America's first commercial jet service began with a Boeing 707 flight in 1958. The next month according to National Public Radio's "Morning Edition," a passenger on a soon to be obsolete propeller-driven DC-6 airliner struck up a conversation with another passenger who happened to be a Boeing engineer.

Externally based faith

The curious traveler asked the engineer about the new jet aircraft and the engineer spoke convincingly about the rigorous testing Boeing had completed on the cutting-edge model. He went on to explain about Boeing's extensive experience in designing jet engines. All went well until the passenger asked the most critical question, "Have you flown on the new 707 jet?" The engineer's testimony grounded in external faith crashed and burned when he replied, "I think I'll wait until it's been in service awhile."

Although the Boeing engineer believed a great deal in his company and in the aerodynamic principles of jet flight, until he stepped foot and actually flew on the Boeing 707 his faith lacked credibility.

In the late nineteenth century, Susan B. Anthony, a delegate to the Sons of Temperance Meeting in Albany, New York was denied the right to speak from the platform because of her gender. Immediately putting her faith into action, Anthony organized a group of like-minded advocates to form the Women's State Temperance Society of New York, an organization dedicated to the pursuit of securing a Constitutional Amendment establishing a woman's right to vote.

Internally based faith

Although her campaign to include women in the fifteenth Amendment failed miserably and she would never get to cast a vote herself, Anthony's dream was finally realized just before her death in 1920 with the ratification of the nineteenth Amendment. Unlike the Boeing engineer, Susan B. Anthony had the courage to act on her faith rather than wait on coincidence or someone else to get the ball rolling.

Useful tips

If you knew the exact time when life, as you know it, would be over, what would you do differently? More specifically, if you had only one year left and had to continue working for a living, what would you change about your daily routine right now? For one thing, you would probably stop procrastinating, so here are a few useful tips to help you do just that right now:

1. Create tomorrow, don't maintain yesterday.

Abandon anything that doesn't support what's most important to you. For example, when my clients come to me for help in landing their dream job, they are making a statement to themselves that the dream job process is one of the most important aspects of their lives and should be treated as such.

2. See your challenges as opportunities.

Often when we procrastinate, it's because any challenge or obstacle in our path causes us to freeze up and say, "Not today." Viewing what's presented to you as an opportunity is a gift that will enable you to learn, grow, evolve and create the amount of change necessary to stop procrastinating.

3. Use resources wisely.

Resources come in such forms as energy, money and time. Instead of procrastinating, always question how you can best use your resources for each minute of the day.

THINK POSITIVE!

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAW

4. Take action today for what you want tomorrow.

Taking action today is about actively embracing the concepts of discipline, motivation and pursuing. When we procrastinate, we simply aren't remaining focused or in pursuit of what we truly want. When you decide to take action, your steps should be specific, achievable, realistic and timely, but "careful planning" is no excuse to procrastinate.

By taking action today, in the present moment, you are tangibly demonstrating that you have faith in your future because you are proactively making decisions to align your current status in life with what you want to achieve in the long run. John Dryden once said, "They can conquer who believe they can." And we should add, who are willing to act on their faith today rather than putting it off until tomorrow.

(*Activate your faith in your future right now by visiting the web site at* http://www.dreamjobcoaching.com.*Reprinted with permission. Copyright by* dreamjobcoaching.com)

An inside look at Rosner's 'Gray Matters'

From page B16

too busy. So, we wanted to provide the six things every employee needs to know about business in an entertaining format. The six key things are (in descending order): 6. Dealing with change, 5. Walking your talk, 4. Dollars and sense, 3. Politics, 2. Customers and the most important thing to be successful in business, 1. Maintaining Relationships.

PaW: How did you come up with your list of seven deadly workplace sins?

Rosner: I polled audiences for their biggest headaches. After speaking to over 6,000 people, a trend emerged. Their top headaches (again in descending order) were: 5. Fear of losing their job, 4. Office politics, 3. Stress, 2. Motivating the people around you and the top headache, Time management. We took that information to create a profile of today's worker. We came up with exhausted, angry, ready to surrender, feeling obsolete and incompetent, withdrawing and dysfunctional. Sound familiar?

PaW: How did the three of you write the book, blend your ideas? What helped all of you write it? What hindered all of you in writing it?

Rosner: We thought the book would involve a lot of back and forth between the authors. Remarkably, the book almost wrote itself. I initially made an outline of the business points. Allan Halcrow turned each section into a seven to ten page narrative. And then John Lavin drew the pictures and created the dialogue. There were some revisions, but we quickly found that we were all working off the same page. One interesting fact, John and Allan, my two co-authors have never met. Everything was done through e-mail and phone calls. In fact, John and Allan have a tradition where they begin every phone call by asking what the other person is wearing.

PaW: Do you have a new presentation based on the book? How does it go?

Rosner: Yes, my new talk is called "Repenting the Seven Deadly Workplace Sins." It's very interactive. Sometimes I even structure the entire speech as a game show to get the audience involved in understanding the sins and how to overcome them in the people they work with. And most importantly, to even overcome the sins in themselves.

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Rosner: I was struck by the kindness of every Filipino that I met. I have never felt more welcome anywhere. I also got the sense that the Philippines has a lot of process. Meaning you often have to jump through a lot of hoops to get things accomplished. I believe that "Gray Matters" can serve as a guide through the personalities and obstacles that we all face at work. My favorite comment about the book came from an e-mail that thanked us for giving the reader insight about how to deal with someone they were having problems at work. When the person got to know the character in the book, they gained insight that they were able to use in real life with their coworker.

PaW: What next after "Gray Matters," the book?

Rosner: I'm working on a live web broadcast that will be available in the Philippines via ABCnews.com. I'm also working on a new weekly column called WorkOver, where I'll do workplace makeovers. I'm still busy speaking to corporations and associations. But my most important job right now is being a good father to my six-month old baby girl.

One final comment, I can't remember a speech that I enjoyed more than the series of talks that I gave in the Philippines two years ago. I am looking forward to returning soon. I'm also very proud to be in the People at Work section of the Philippine Daily INQUIRER. It is the most informative and interesting section on working issues that I've seen in any paper in the world.

ROSNER

The good teacher

By Didith Tan-Rodrigo

IN THE STAID and serious university community, we have our share of campus superstars. I refer here not to kolehiyala VJs or varsity jocks but to well-loved and highly respected teachers. These are the masters of their subject matter. They know "everything," to the extent of being able to teach without notes or books. They communicate precisely, unambiguously. They have the ability to coax students into wrapping their minds around the most complex of topics. They inspire with their humility and their example. Finally, they have a genuine love for their students. These are the good teachers, who touch and shape lives as part of a day's work.

Behind the scenes, though, the good teacher is defined by more than just his or her competence with students and subject matter. There are expectations from faculty members that are often times unfamiliar to those outside the academe. Good teachers are expected to engage in research, creative work, or professional practice. They must continue to update themselves on current developments in their fields. They are also expected to contribute to their fields by conducting studies and experiments, writing software, analyzing data, expressing creativity through art, working for industry, or by involving themselves in government or non-government organizations.

Expectations

One measure of creative activity is publication, preferably in peer-reviewed conferences or journals. Good teachers must subject their work to the scrutiny of other members of their fields of expertise. They must open their outputs to constructive criticism, taking advantage of opportunities to discuss their ideas with their peers. Teachers who do not have any research, creative output, or professional practice risk losing touch with their subject areas and stagnating.

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Christa McAuliffe, the school teacher onboard the ill-fated space shuttle Challenger, once said, "I touch the future, I teach." The work involved in touching the future is varied, complex, and difficult. The good teacher touches the future through his interactions with his students, though contributions to his field of expertise, and through work with his community. Few rise to this challenge. But then again, few are truly good teachers.

(*Didith Tan Rodrigo is an assistant professor at the Ateneo de Manila University's Department of Information Systems and Computer Science.*)

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

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Time off from work

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara

IT was his first time at the beach. He gazed out at the blue expanse before him: the waves lapping up the shore, the boats in the horizon and without hesitation, he pulled off his shirt. He was determined to conquer this blue sea.

Oh, to be two years old and fearless.

It was not her first time at the beach. She gazed out at the blue expanse before her—it stretched farther than she had remembered. There were no buoys to define the stretch safe for swimmers and without hesitation, she pulled away and took shelter in the nearest hut. She was determined to get just the right tan to show off after her day by the sea.

Oh, to be almost fourteen and clueless.

It was our New Year resolution to spend more time at the beach. Still, it took an act of Herculean will to simply pull out of our weekly routine, and all that bind us to work and city life, just to get the kids out and gaze at this blue expanse. When we didn't have kids yet, we were beach bums, we scuba dived, snorkeled, and sunbathed, but today, we were filled with hesitation. Was the sun too harsh for my toddler? How deep was the water? Could there be jellyfish? Would teenage boys lure the daughter away? What other dangers lurked by the sea?

Oh, to be forty and hopeless.

There's an invisible line we cross when we become parents. We stop pushing relentlessly and start balancing compulsively. There is suddenly so much to weigh, so much to consider before we can move forward. There is, of course, the work-life balance, the seesaw we have devoted so much of this column to figure out.

But there are other balancing acts, too, those that have to do with balancing the different needs and expectations of our kids at different ages: one that needs to explore and another that needs to cocoon. The balancing act of the different seasons of the year: making sure that vacation time is just as activity-packed as school time. The balancing act of being both friend and authority figure in your child's life: the line between being your daughter's confidante and being her watchdog. The balancing act of being the staunchest believer in your kids and also the most sensitive to their weaknesses: the line between being the cheerleader and being the reality check.

Invisible line

We don't think much about these trapeze acts we do everyday. After crossing into parenthood, we just move from one spot to the next, swaying, swinging, and using all our might to stay upright. But it is necessary to summon your own Herculean will to pull back, stare at the great expanse before you, and observe the boats and ships that cross your horizon.

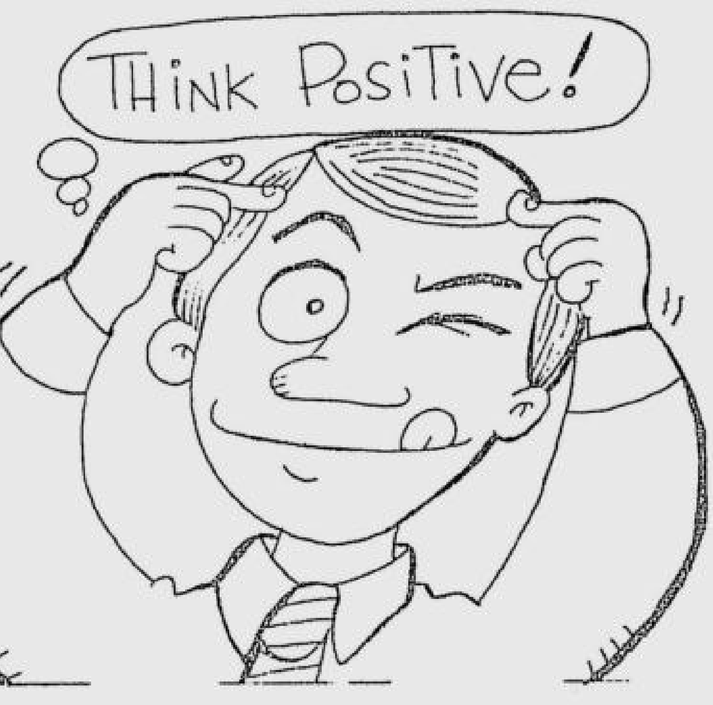
Taking stock

What will allow us to do all the balancing acts that we have to do? It's the ability to look up once in a while, take stock, and look at your life as if you are gazing at it for the first time. Observe what makes you courageous, what makes you purpose-driven, and go towards that shoreline. If the life you lead now doesn't bring out the hope, fearlessness, and passion in you, then it's time to re-assess.

We might be so intent on our balancing acts, so focused on simply getting from one point to another, that we forget to enjoy the courage of the fearless two-year-old, the innocence of our clueless thirteen-year-old, and the lingering hope in the hopeless forty-year-old.

(*An Mercado-Alcantara is founding editor of Working Mom magazine published by ABS-CBN Publishing, Inc. For more tips on how to strike work-life balance, check out this month's issue with Charlene Gonzalez on the cover. You may write to her at* an_alcantara@abs.pinoycentral.com.)

How to put faith to work


THINK POSITIVE!

By Joel Garfinkle

WHETHER the objective is find their dream job or love their jobs more, most people misinterpret faith as simply believing that something totally unforeseen will miraculously happen to them to improve their lives based upon misplaced "hope" in the future. Even worse, some individuals use faith as a disengaging excuse to procrastinate by internalizing a mentality such as "I hope that things work out for me," or "Things will get better for me tomorrow."

However, these philosophies relegate the empowering attributes of hope and faith into nothing more than dumb luck. Unlike the above external definition, I believe faith is internal and rather than materializing somewhere down the road, faith starts fully grounded in the present. In other words, you have the power to control your life in your current circumstances and what you do or create today, ultimately, impacts your destiny.

In order to better help you distinguish the inherent differences between internal and external based faith, let's take a look at two real life examples. America's first commercial jet service began with a Boeing 707 flight in 1958. The next month according to National Public Radio's "Morning Edition," a passenger on a soon to be obsolete propeller-driven DC-6 airliner struck up a conversation with another passenger who happened to be a Boeing engineer.

Externally based faith

The curious traveler asked the engineer about the new jet aircraft and the engineer spoke convincingly about the rigorous testing Boeing had completed on the cutting-edge model. He went on to explain about Boeing's extensive experience in designing jet engines. All went well until the passenger asked the most critical question, "Have you flown on the new 707 jet?" The engineer's testimony grounded in external faith crashed and burned when he replied, "I think I'll wait until it's been in service awhile."

Although the Boeing engineer believed a great deal in his company and in the aerodynamic principles of jet flight, until he stepped foot and actually flew on the Boeing 707 his faith lacked credibility.

In the late nineteenth century, Susan B. Anthony, a delegate to the Sons of Temperance Meeting in Albany, New York was denied the right to speak from the platform because of her gender. Immediately putting her faith into action, Anthony organized a group of like-minded advocates to form the Women's State Temperance Society of New York, an organization dedicated to the pursuit of securing a Constitutional Amendment establishing a woman's right to vote.

Internally based faith

Although her campaign to include women in the fifteenth Amendment failed miserably and she would never get to cast a vote herself, Anthony's dream was finally realized just before her death in 1920 with the ratification of the nineteenth Amendment. Unlike the Boeing engineer, Susan B. Anthony had the courage to act on her faith rather than wait on coincidence or someone else to get the ball rolling.

Useful tips

If you knew the exact time when life, as you know it, would be over, what would you do differently? More specifically, if you had only one year left and had to continue working for a living, what would you change about your daily routine right now? For one thing, you would probably stop procrastinating, so here are a few useful tips to help you do just that right now.

1. Create tomorrow, don't maintain yesterday.

Abandon anything that doesn't support what's most important to you. For example, when my clients come to me for help in landing their dream job, they are making a statement to themselves that the dream job process is one of the most important aspects of their lives and should be treated as such.

2. See your challenges as opportunities.

Often when we procrastinate, it's because any challenge or obstacle in our path causes us to freeze up and say, "Not today." Viewing what's presented to you as an opportunity is a gift that will enable you to learn, grow, evolve and create the amount of change necessary to stop procrastinating.

3. Use resources wisely.

Resources come in such forms as energy, money and time. Instead of procrastinating, always question how you can best use your resource for each minute of the day.

4. Take action today for what you want tomorrow.

Taking action today [illegible] about [illegible] tively embracing the concepts [illegible] discipline, motivation and pursu[illegible] When we procrastinate, we [illegible] imply [illegible] aren't remaining focused on [illegible] pursuit of what we truly want. When you decide to take action, your [illegible] steps should be specific, achievable, [illegible] istic and timely [illegible] "can [illegible] ning" no excu[illegible] procrastin[illegible]

By taking action today, in the [illegible] sent moment, [illegible] are demonstrating [illegible]

[illegible] because you [illegible] decisions [illegible] after [illegible] want to achieve [illegible] John Dryden once said, "They can conquer who believe they [illegible]" And [illegible] should add, who are [illegible] act on their faith today rather [illegible] putting it off until to-[illegible]

[illegible] *faith in your future* [illegible] *visiting the web site at* http[illegible]w.dr[illegible]mjobcoaching.com. R[illegible] *with permission. Copy*[illegible] jobcoaching.com)

An inside look at Rosner's 'Gray Matters'

From page B16

too busy. So, we wanted to provide the six things every employee needs to know about business in an entertaining format. The six key things are (in descending order): 6. Dealing with change. 5. Walking your talk. 4. Dollars and sense. 3. Politics. 2. Customers and the most important thing to be successful in business, 1. Maintaining Relationships.

PaW: How did you come up with your list of seven deadly workplace sins?

Rosner: I polled audiences for their biggest headaches. After speaking to over 6,000 people, a trend emerged. Their top headaches (again in descending order) were: 5. Fear of losing their job. 4. Office politics, 3. Stress, 2. Motivating the people around you and the top headache, Time management. We took that information to create a profile of today's worker. We came up with exhausted, angry, ready to surrender, feeling obsolete and incompetent, withdrawing and dysfunctional. Sound familiar?

PaW: How did the three of you write the book, blend your ideas? What helped all of you write it? What hindered all of you in writing it?

Rosner: We thought the book would involve a lot of back and forth between the authors. Remarkably, the book almost wrote itself. I initially made an outline of the business points. Allan Halcrow turned each section into a seven to ten page narrative. And then John Lavin drew the pictures and created the dialogue. There were some revisions, but we quickly found that we were all working off the same page. One interesting fact, John and Allan, my two co-authors have never met. Everything was done through e-mail and phone calls. In fact, John and Allan have a tradition where they begin every phone call by asking what the other person is wearing.

PaW: Do you have a new presentation based on the book? How does it go?

Rosner: Yes, my new talk is called "Repenting the Seven Deadly Workplace Sins." It's very interactive. Sometimes I even structure the entire speech as a game show to get the audience involved in understanding the sins and how to overcome them in the people they work with. And most importantly, to even overcome the sins in themselves.

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PEOPLE at WORK

E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

How can you motivate people at work?

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I'm frustrated that my team isn't performing at the rate that I'd like them to perform. What can I do to light a fire under my people?

Not Smokey

The Palo Alto, CA City Council recently debated an ordinance that outlawed bad body language. Frowning and sticking out your tongue would be banned from Council hearings. The law was defeated, according to local press accounts, "with looks of disdain" after a rancorous debate.

Trying to ban frowning is silly, but assuming that it has no impact is equally wrong. The goal of this column is to focus on all of those little things that have a huge impact at work and what you can do about them. For more information, check out the "1001 Rewards and Recognition Fieldbook" by Bob Nelson and Spitzer (Workman, 2003).

Are expectations unclear? So much of management is like the game of telephone that we all played as kids. We think that we're totally clear in our communications until we listen to someone further down the chain who gets a totally garbled message. Unless you've hired a staff of mind readers it's very important to clearly communicate your expectations and listen to your employees to see if they got what you were trying to say.

Does your organization waste a lot of people's time and efforts? Most corporations talk about being lean and mean, but in reality they have lots of hoops that people have to jump through to do their jobs. See how much stuff you can eliminate: reports that no one ever reads, meetings that never accomplish anything, etc.

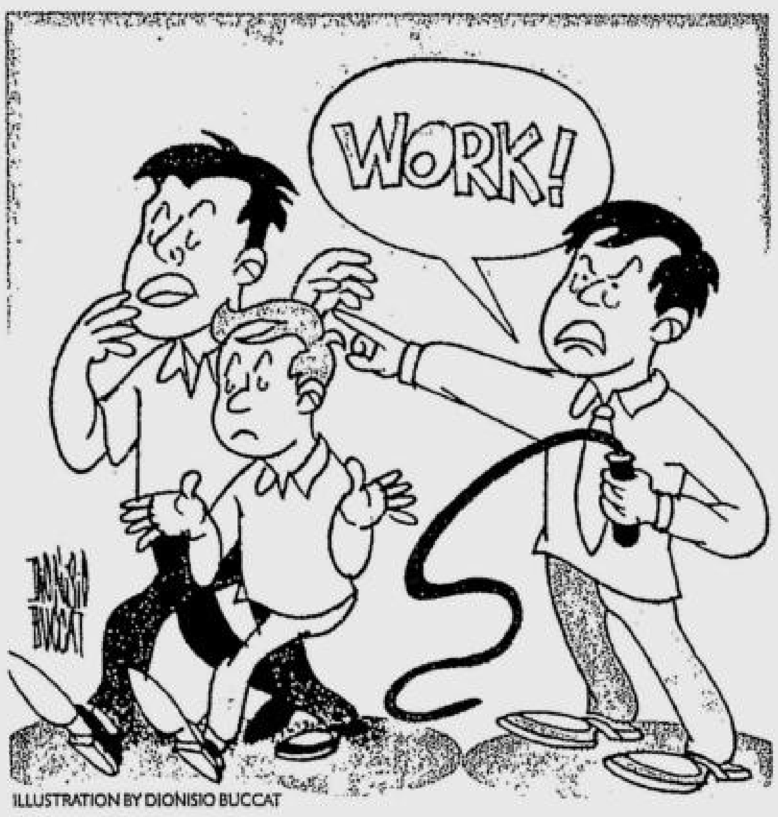
Is your organization poor at following up? 360-degree evaluations are the classic example. A company puts a ton of effort into disseminating and evaluating the review forms. But it puts hardly and effort into giving each employee feedback on their performance and what they can do to improve it. Follow-up isn't the icing on the cake, it is the cake.

Does your organization have a reputation for unfairness? A WorkingWounded.com poll asked what is most important to employees. At the top of the list was "treating people fairly." The ironic thing is that it was the one thing on the list that didn't cost any money to implement. Maybe the best things in life ARE free.

Is management invisible when it really counts? Talk to most bosses and most companies would appear to have open door policies. Talk to most employees and you'll think that most people work in prison. Make sure that people have access to you on a daily basis.

Do you make your corner of the bureaucracy the best informed? Most of us can't change the direction of our companies. But we can do a better job of sharing information with our people. When the rumor mill is working overtime, take time with your people to give them any information that you can. Start following these strategies and you'll turn that frown upside down.

(Mr. Rosner is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.com.)



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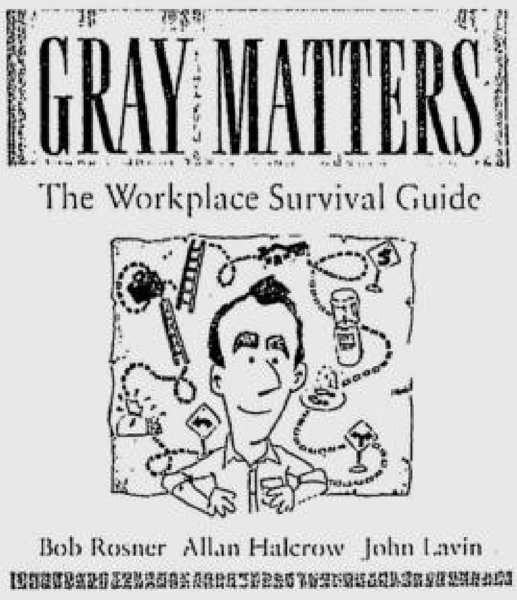
INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

An inside look at Rosner's 'Gray Matters'


GRAY MATTERS
The Workplace Survival Guide
Bob Rosner Allan Halcrow John Lavin

By Regina Galang Reyes

HERE'S an inside look on how the book "Gray Matters: Use Ours, Use Yours" (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003), the most innovative business book on the market today, got written.

Rosner wrote this book in partnership with Allan Halcrow, a writer, consultant and partner in WorkPositive, a training and consulting firm that focuses on interpersonal skills in the workplace, and John Lavin, an artist based in Seattle, Washington, USA. This book follows Rosner's two other bestsellers, "Working Wounded" (Warner Books, Inc., 1998) and "The Boss's Survival Guide" (McGraw-Hill, 2001).

A review on this book appeared in this section last April 21, 2004.

People at Work (PaW): How did you and the other authors come up with the idea of Gray Matters?

Rosner: I was in an executive's office. I picked up a business book in his bookshelf. When I opened it, out flew the receipt from where he purchased the book. He had never opened it after the day he bought it. I realized that most of us don't have time to read. So, we wanted to create a book that was impossible to put down, that told a compelling story that you would find the time to read.

PaW: Why decide to use comic characters for your book? Are these characters in some ways based on real people you've encountered?

Rosner: Comics are the most compelling way to tell a story that I've found. There is also a unique ability for comics to pull you into the story. Almost everyone one I've talked to who has read Gray Matters always begins by saying, "I worked with Sherman, etc." All of the characters came out of the personal experiences of the three authors. And a lot of the story line came directly from my e-mail. And even though I live in the US, a huge amount of my e-mail comes from the Philippines, thanks to my column in the Philippine Daily INQUIRER.

PaW: Success of a business covers such a wide range of factors. Why did you focus on specific areas included in your book?

Rosner: I speak to a lot of executives. One of the biggest complaints that I hear on a regular basis is that employees don't understand how business works. Ironically, when I ask these executives if they take the time to explain their financials, business operations, etc. to the employees, they always say no, they are

AN INSIDE/ B15

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PLDT 75 THINK AHEAD

PEOPLE

E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

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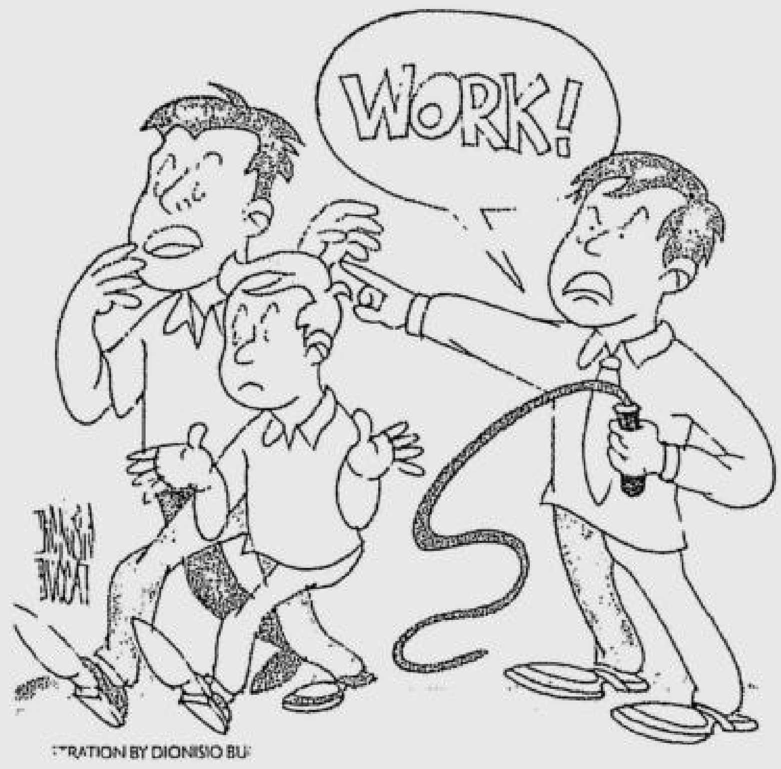

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A review on this book appe[illegible] [illegible] last Apr. 21, 2004

People at Work (PaW): How [illegible] the other author[illegible] ome in w[illegible] Gray Matters

Rosner: I wa[illegible] ecutiv[illegible] picked up a busin[illegible] book [illegible] When I opened it, [illegible] flew [illegible] he [illegible] where he purchased [illegible] book. He [illegible] opened it after [illegible] bough[illegible] that most of us [illegible] time [illegible] wanted to creat[illegible] hat w[illegible] to put down, that told [illegible] mp[illegible] you would find the tim[illegible]

PaW: Why decide [illegible] for your book? Are [illegible] ways based on [illegible] tered?

Rosner: Comic [illegible] way to tell a story that I'[illegible] a unique ability for comm[illegible] story. Almost everyone one [illegible] has read Gray Matter[illegible] alw[illegible] ing, "I worked with Sherman [illegible] characters came out of the pe[illegible] ences of the three authors. And [illegible] ry line came directly from my [illegible] even though I live in the US, a h[illegible] my e-mail comes from the Philipp[illegible] to my column in the Philippine Da[illegible]

PaW: Success of a business [illegible] wide range of factors. Why did yo[illegible] specific areas included in your book

Rosner: I speak to a lot of exe[illegible] of the biggest complaints that I he[illegible] at basis is that employees don'[illegible] how business works from [illegible] these executives [illegible] they take [illegible] plain their financials busine[illegible] to the employees they always say n[illegible]

AN INSIDE B1

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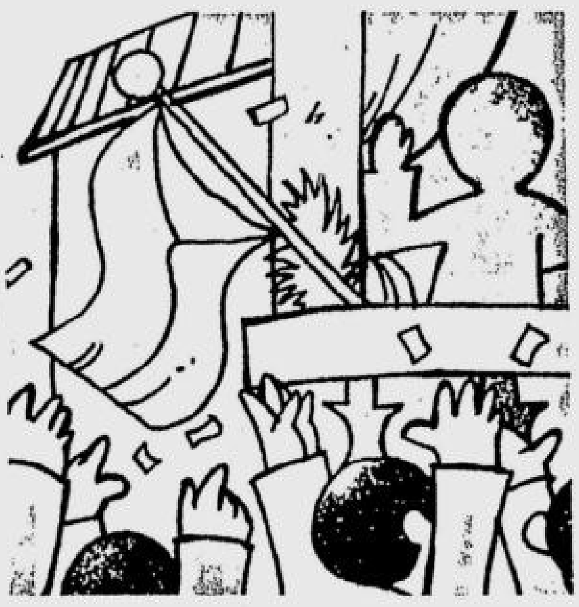
Politics and all that jazz

In this issue, 2bU! sticks its hands into the national circus, er, elections. Now, before you groan about having to scrub perma-ink off your thumb after the 10th, chow down on a serving of each presidential candidate's platform, as well as tips on how to vote wisely (because unlike reality TV, these candidates don't win money, but a whole country). And since Mother's Day is fast approaching (what, you didn't forget, did you?), we're giving you a chance to let the world know how much you love that one woman in your life (check out D4 for more details)! Ready, set, vote!



BAHH NA.
CLAP KLAP CLAAP

[illegible]

SMART Buddy Pre-Paid downloads

TOP CHARTS

POP HITS

1	Toxic	*Britney Spears*	**TONE TOXIC**
2	Heal	*Westlife*	**TONE FEEL**
3	Signed, Sealed, Delivered	*Blue feat. Stevie Wonder*	**TONE SIGNED**
4	The Voice Within	*Christina Aguilera*	**TONE VOICEW**
5	I'll Be	*Edwin McCain*	**TONE IBE**
6	White Flag	*Dido*	**TONE WHITEF**
7	A Thousand Miles	*Vanessa Carlton*	**TONE THOUSAND**
8	Love Song For No One	*John Mayer*	**TONE SONG4NO1**
9	Shape	*Sugababes*	**TONE SHAPE**
10	There's Gotta Be (More To Life)	*Stacie Orrico*	**TONE MORETO**

RNB HITS

1	Officially Missing You	*Tamia*	**TONE OFFICIALLY**
2	Step In The Name Of Love	*R. Kelly*	**TONE STEPIN**
3	So Into You	*Fabolous feat. Ashanti*	**TONE INTOU**
4	No Letting Go	*Wayne Wonder*	**TONE NOLET**
5	Frontin'	*Pharrell feat. Jay-Z*	**TONE FRONTIN**
6	I'll Never Leave You	*Lumidee*	**TONE NEVERLEAVE**
7	Damage	*TLC*	**TONE DAMAGE**
8	Bump N Grind	*R. Kelly*	**TONE BUMPNGRIND**
9	21 Questions	*50 Cent*	**TONE 21QUES**
10	Work It Out	*Beyonce*	**TONE WORKITOUT**

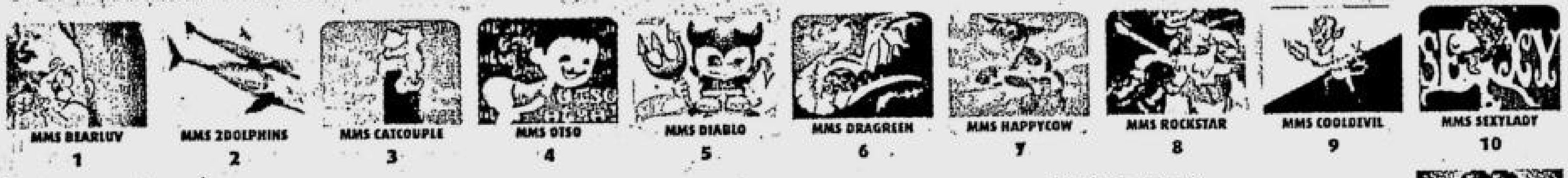
NEW WAVE HITS

1	Friday I'm In Love	*The Cure*	**TONE FRIDAYIM**
2	Take On Me	*AHA*	**TONE TAKEON**
3	Love Shack	*B-52's*	**TONE LUVSHAK**
4	99 Luft Balloons	*Nena*	**TONE 99RED**
5	Rio	*Duran Duran*	**TONE RIO**
6	Turning Japanese	*The Vapors*	**TONE JAPANIS**
7	We Got The Beat	*Go Go's*	**TONE WEGOTDBEAT**
8	Karma Chameleon	*Culture Club*	**TONE KARMA**
9	Gold	*Spandau Ballet*	**TONE GOLD**
10	Head Over Heels	*Go Go's*	**TONE HEDOVRHIL**

OPM Hits

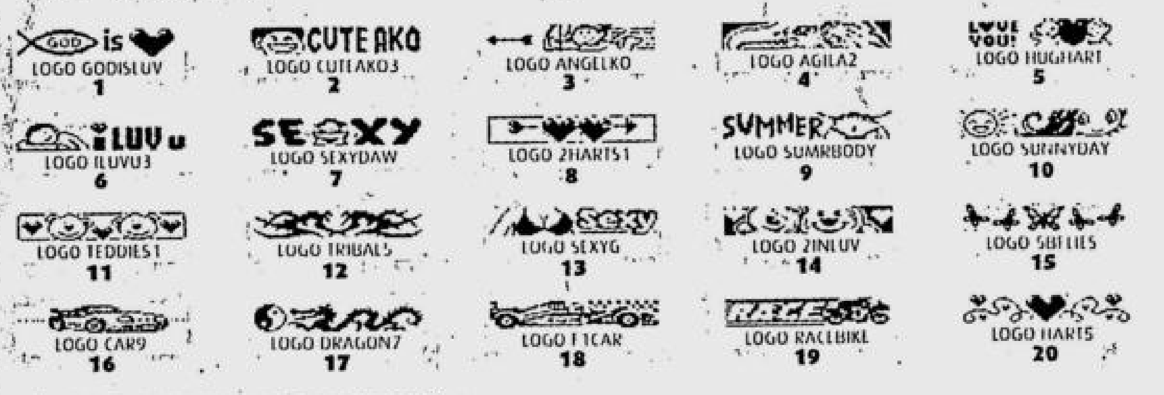
1	A Love To Share	*Rivermaya*	**TONE LUV2SHARE**
2	Alam Kong Di Ako, Okey Lang	*Bayani Agbayani*	**TONE OKEYLANG**
3	Kung Ako Na Lang Sana	*Bituin Escalante*	**TONE KUNGAKO**
4	Bakit Pa Ba	*Jay-R*	**TONE BAKITPABA**
5	Friend Of Mine	*Kuh Ledesma*	**TONE FRIENDOF**
6	Toyang	*Eraserheads*	**TONE TOYANG**
7	Kisap Mata	*Rivermaya*	**TONE KISAP**
8	Miss Flawless	*Angelica Jones*	**TONE FLAW**
9	Mr. Suave	*Parokya Ni Edgar*	**TONE MRSUAVE**
10	Don't Know What To Say	*Ric Sigreto*	**TONE WAT2SAY**

TOP WALLPAPERS



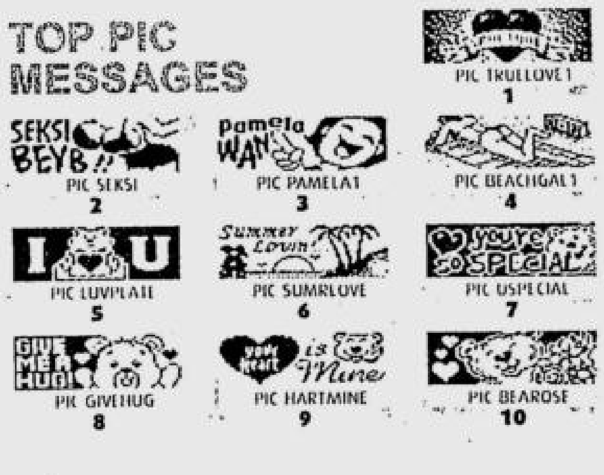
1	MMS BEARLUV
2	MMS 2DOLPHINS
3	MMS CATCOUPLE
4	MMS OTSO
5	MMS DIABLO
6	MMS DRAGREEN
7	MMS HAPPYCOW
8	MMS ROCKSTAR
9	MMS COOLDEVIL
10	MMS SEXYLADY

TOP LOGOS



1	LOGO GODISLUV
2	LOGO CUTEAKO3
3	LOGO ANGELKO
4	LOGO AGILA2
5	LOGO HUGHART
6	LOGO ILUVU3
7	LOGO SEXYDAW
8	LOGO 2HARTS1
9	LOGO SUMRBODY
10	LOGO SUNNYDAY
11	LOGO TEDDIES1
12	LOGO TRIBALS
13	LOGO SEXYG
14	LOGO 2INLUV
15	LOGO SBFLIES
16	LOGO CAR9
17	LOGO DRAGON7
18	LOGO F1CAR
19	LOGO RACEBIKE
20	LOGO HARTS

TOP PIC MESSAGES



1	PIC TRULOVE1
2	PIC SEKSI
3	PIC PAMELA1
4	PIC BEACHGAL1
5	PIC LUVPLATE
6	PIC SUMRLOVE
7	PIC USPECIAL
8	PIC GIVEHUG
9	PIC HARTMINE
10	PIC BEAROSE

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Note. In order for you to identify which musical work the ring tone in question is based on, we have, an addition to the song title, referred an artist who has made the song well known. The artist in question has not participated in the production of the ring tone.

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A way out of ignorance

SAFE 4 SR awards interest-free loans to qualified students

By Pam Pastor

TWENTY-ONE-YEAR-OLD Jen struggled through college. With her parents back in the province and her brothers and sisters also needing support, there wasn't always enough money to go around.

Enrolment was always a challenge for her. So she started working part-time to help pay for her studies and school needs, but it wasn't always easy.

It became evident to her that when she started dividing her time and attention between school and work, her grades ended up slipping.

But truthfully, Jen can still consider herself lucky. After all, she did get her diploma and is now enjoying her first job.

Interest-free loans

The bigger picture is a darker one.

Every year, an average of 20 percent of graduating students drop out of school because of financial reasons.

In a country that places so much hope on the youth, this is devastating.

But the statistics are rapidly changing, thanks to a new program launched by the government.

Dennis Cunanan, presidential assistant for youth affairs of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, shared with us the good news recently.

The Students' Assistance Fund for a Strong Republic (SAFE 4 SR) is an interest-free student loan program for third, fourth, fifth and graduating college students. Students from CHED-recognized higher education institutions who are on their third, fourth, fifth or graduating year and who are not beneficiaries of other scholarship programs of the government may avail of the loan.

But they must make sure that they meet the passing weighted average from the previous semester and will only use the money for educational expenses.

Students who are interested in the project should contact their school's Student Financial Assistance Unit or Student Affairs Office and ask for guidelines and the application form. They must then submit the requirements and tell their SFA officer how much they intend to borrow. The SFA officer will determine if the amount requested is reasonable and necessary.

DENNIS Cunanan, presidential assistant for youth affairs

Those who are qualified may borrow as much as P8,000 per semester. This amount will be determined by the school's Student Financial Assistance. The student loan is not only for tuition. It can be used for books, projects, thesis papers, graduation fees and other valid educational expenses, including even board and lodging.

Two years after they graduate, students are required to start paying back the amount they loaned. They may arrange with their alma mater to pay every two weeks or go for monthly installments to be deposited in the program's account. If their loans are below P4,000, they are given five years to pay. Loans from P4,000 up to P8,000 have to be paid within 10 years.

The initial aim was to provide loans for at least 100,000 students. With the help of a great number of schools both in the NCR and the provinces, it is sensible to assume that this goal would be easy to surpass. And more and more schools are signing up to become partner institutions.

Give-and-take

There is no reason for Filipinos to be satisfied with an elementary or high school education, the people behind this project said. Just these past months, a large number of students were able to graduate with the help of SAFE 4 SR. According to Cunanan, they were able to help 90 percent of the people who would have otherwise dropped out.

Give-and-take plays a role in this project. Being a SAFE 4 SR recipient entails responsibilities. Apart from paying back the borrowed money within the given time period, students need to notify the school if they are changing their address, are working, changing jobs or getting married.

Recipients are also asked to plant a tree in an area specified by the school (this is a tie-up with the government's tree-planting program) and be an active partner in the government's vision to build a strong republic.

Pretty reasonable things to ask for. And apparently, too reasonable for some.

What's the catch? Some people are asking. Is it so hard to believe that this project was launched because of the government's desire to produce a top-caliber workforce? In a society that runs on the "There's no such thing as a free lunch" principle, the concept might sound too good to be true.

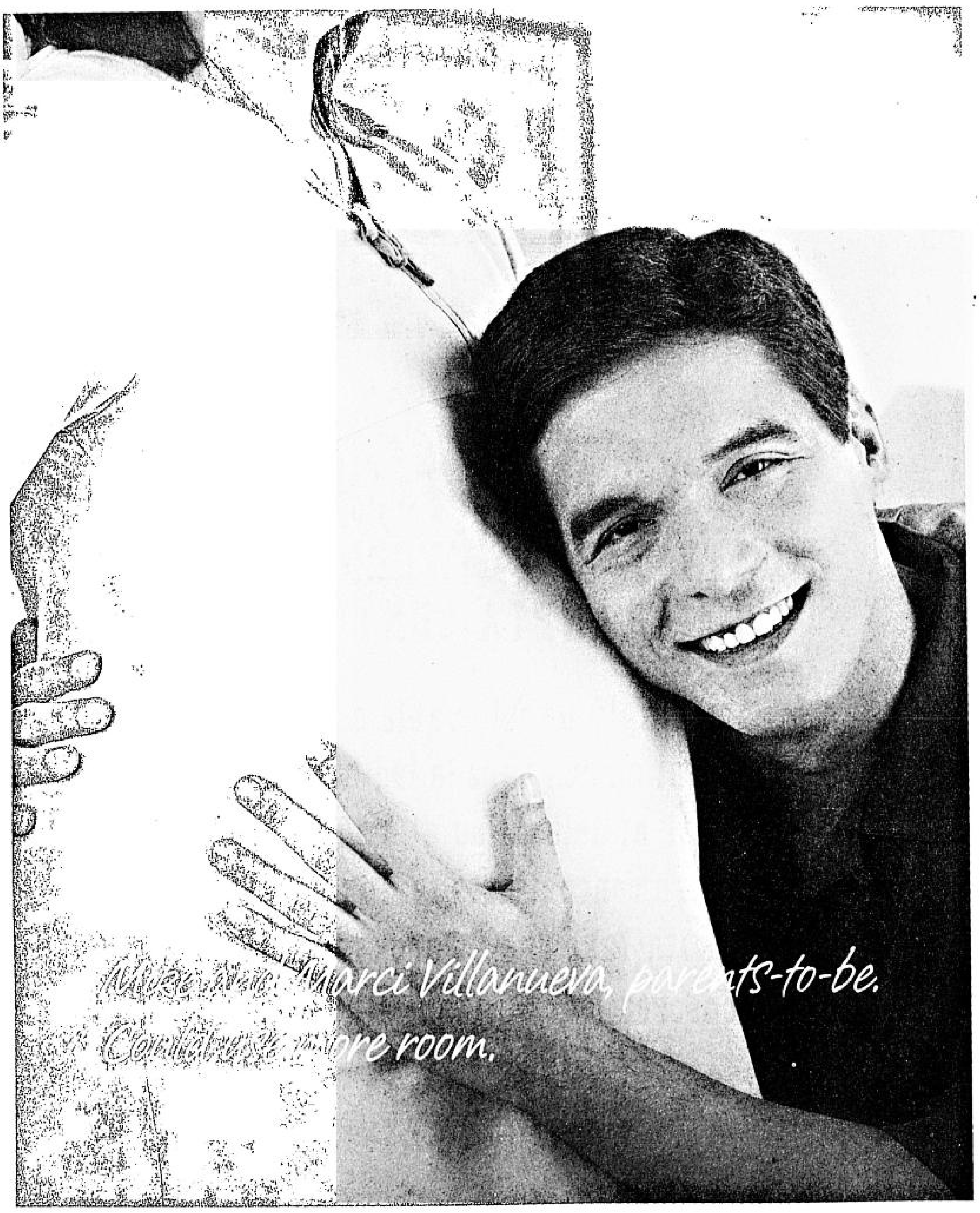
It's politics, detractors would most probably say.

Maybe, maybe not.

But hey, if politics brought about other similar projects, this country would be a much better place.

Those who do not qualify for SAFE 4 SR may avail of the other Student Financial Assistance Programs of the Commission on Higher Education. Visit www.ched.gov.ph. for more information.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.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BOY BAND IN ARABIA

By Nancy T. Lu

Fans of Taiwanese boyband F4 know that very rarely can they catch Jerry Yan, Ken Zhu, Vic Zhou and Vanness Wu together in one place.

When news about their closely guarded secret assignment to shoot a Pepsi commercial in Amman, Jordan, leaked out recently, some of F4's diehard followers hurriedly booked themselves on a flight to the exotic Middle East destination, even blocking off the business-class section so that the super celebrities had no choice but to settle for seats in the economy class.

Actually, there were five other entertainment world hotshots from both sides of the Taiwan Strait in the commercial. They were Aaron Kwok, Cheng Hsiu-wen, Chou Chieh-lun, Tsai I-lin and Chen Kuan-hsi, all much idolized in the Chinese-speaking world.

But F4, as provided for in the script of this most ambitious Pepsi project, stole the thunder from everyone. They did a lot of fight scenes in the desert. Just like the stars in Ang Lee's "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," they even had to hang on wires in order to simulate the high-flying and cliff-scaling stunts of martial arts heroes.

In fact, when the four first emerged in their ancient warriors' costumes, they had a good laugh at themselves. They gave onlookers an amusing picture of straightforward and carefree boys ready for the cliffhanger commercial.

Jerry Yan expressed satisfaction with his "deadly" look. Ken Zhu remarked that his period costume struck him as "cool." Vic Zhou said he appeared "more cool" than Jerry Yan in his character outfit, "more handsome" than Ken Chu and "more suitably and comfortably dressed for the fight scene" than Vanness Wu.

While shooting the commercial, which was about the fight for a treasure at a historical desert site, the stars had a battalion of 100 Jordanian soldiers acting as bodyguards.

Fans and the press had to be kept at a distance. But some still managed to steal shots of Vic Zhou rock-climbing at a steep height of about seven stories along a narrow gorge.

It took the boys at least two hours to dress up inside their respective tents. Some 30 accessories had to be put on to complete each look, created by Yu Chia-an. Hairpieces were added to make them appear like real comic-book heroes. In fact, their makeup artists brought along a pile of comic books for use as references.

Jerry Yan and Vic Zhou were reportedly paid eight-digit sums in New Taiwan dollars for doing this Pepsi commercial. Ken Zhu and Vanness Wu received marginally lower amounts.

The members of F4 thought they could enjoy the sights while in Jordan. But screams of recognition at every turn forced them to retire to their hotel rooms most of the time. While in transit in Dubai, they wanted to go shopping. But as soon as they tried to do this, they encountered fans in hot pursuit. As a result, they had no choice but to retreat.

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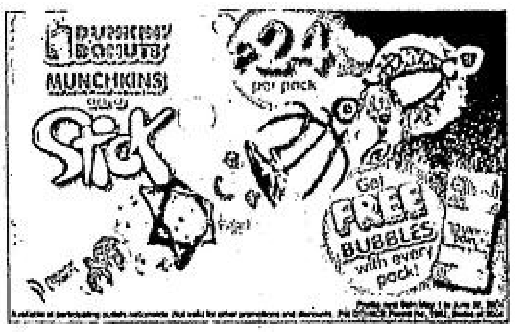
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And the 2004 grand prize goes to...

By the Inquirer Research and Maui V. Reyes

These candidates are asking you to vote them to the highest post in the land. Better take time to check their credentials and vote accordingly—or forfeit the right to bellyache afterwards.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Educational attainment: Ph.D in Economics from U.P., MA Economics from AdMU, AB Economics from Assumption College and Georgetown University

Political experience: It's probably a no-brainer that she replaced disgraced President Joseph Estrada after the People Power Revolution in 2001. Before that, she had been Vice President for more than two years, a senator for six years, the undersecretary of the Department of Trade and Industry for three years under President Cory Aquino, and executive director of the Garments and Textile Export Board for two years. Need we add here that she is the daughter of the well-regarded late President Diosdado Macapagal, who was the only president to have a doctorate (a Doctorate in Civil Law and another Doctorate in Economics, both from UST), and was considered the best president by economist Winnie Monsod for his forward-looking decisions to decontrol the economy and introduce land reform.

Career highlights: The INQUIRER named her Filipino of the Year in 2003. She was the topnotcher of the 1995 Senate elections. She was also named the most outstanding senator by the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, Philippine Graphics Weekly Magazine, Philippine Reporter Magazine and Public Eye Magazine.

Running mate: Noli de Castro

Endorsers: Ms Tactless herself, Kris Aquino, as well as Nora Aunor, Ai-Ai de las Alas, Boy Abunda, Eric Santos, Manny Pacquiao and Sarah Geronimo

Platform for education: Promises tuition support for college juniors and seniors needing last installments to finish school. She also plans to continue implementing the Basic Education Curriculum to enhance competencies in English, Math and Science, and the competency-based grading system so schools can concentrate on areas where students need the most help in. She will also implement the "High School Bridge Program" to address the deficiencies as shown by diagnostic exams to better prepare students for secondary education. She also promises to build more classrooms in far-flung barangays.

Platform for environment: She promises to enforce more forcefully such laws and programs as the Clean Air Act, National Integrated Protected Areas System, Integrated Water Resources Management, Community-based Forest Management, and Management of Coastal Areas.

Platform for economy: Plans to modernize the agriculture sector. She promises to bring down the cost of business by getting rid of corruption and streamlining procedures to attract investors. She also promises a campaign against lawless elements to improve investor confidence in the country. She also plans to address long-term needs of the poorest barangay, implement prudent spending and effective revenue generation, support free trade, seek debt restructuring, and pursue measures to provide energy pricing.

Platform for arts and culture: Signed into law the Optical-Media Bill, which hopes to curb video, audio and software piracy.

Scandals: Allegedly has ties with jueteng lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, and has also been accused of taking over the telecommunications firm of businessman Pacifico Marcelo. Her husband is the alleged owner of the Jose Pidal bank account. Under her, the Public Estates Authority constructed the overpriced Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard. She also allegedly hasn't fully declared some properties in San Francisco said to be owned by her husband's family.

Fernando Poe Jr.

Educational attainment: High school sophomore dropout from the University of the East

Political experience: Nada.

Career highlights: Famas Hall of Fame awardee. (That's it, no more nominations for you.)

Running mate: Loren Legarda

Endorsers: Good friends Tito, Vic and Joey, Eddie Garcia, Dolphy, Richard Gomez, Armida Siguion-Reyna and Niño Muhlach

Platform for education: To provide better incentives for teachers and to set up a one-time Education Fund to address the lack of classrooms and teachers. Also put up a satellite distance-learning program for remote areas and revitalize the "Adopt-a-School" program (a cooperative program between private and public sectors to help public schools). Also plans to put up "alternative learning" for out-of-school youths.

Platform for the environment: He will give incentives to consumers and business groups to promote conservation, and raise penalties imposed on firms that destroy the environment. He will strengthen DENR's mandate to punish erring firms. He will provide livelihood opportunities for those displaced by mining.

Platform for the economy: Plans to order government offices to drastically cut costs and travel expenses. He also plans to transform the Bureau of Internal Revenue into a performance-based agency, and to realign the government's budget to prioritize basic services such as food, education, health care and housing. But he does not give details how he will do these.

Platform for culture and arts: To encourage artists who have left the country for greener pastures abroad to come back home. How he plans to do that, we have no idea. Paging Ms Salonga! FPJ wants you to come back home!

Scandals: He allegedly mauled, threatened and urinated on a columnist who criticized his acting skills back in the 1960s. He is also rumored to be temperamental.

Raul Roco

Educational attainment: Master of Comparative Law from University of Pennsylvania, and Bachelor of Laws and AB English from San Beda College

Political experience: Secretary of the Department of Education for a year, a senator for nine years, and a representative of the 2nd district in Camarines Sur for five years

Career highlights: Authored various laws to reform the central banking system, thus earning the "Father of Bangko Sentral" title. Was also the youngest Bicolano delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention. Was named "Honorary Woman" by women's groups. He also implemented the basic education curriculum, which focuses on reading, writing, math, science and social studies.

Running mate: Herminio Aquino

Endorsers: Celeste Legaspi, Bembol Roco, Robert Seña, Isay Alvarez, Pinky Marquez, Joey Ayala, Noel and Joel Trinidad, and South Border (talk about reaching out to the youth!)

Platform for education: You've seen his commercials on MTV: This guy is all about education. On his to-do-list would be providing 100-percent free public elementary and secondary education for the masses, working closely with the Commission on Higher Education to improve teacher training, and prioritizing excellence in math, science, technology and communication.

Platform for the environment: Conservation of biological diversity, protection of oceans and coastal areas, and rational development of living resources. The protection of the atmosphere by combating deforestation, desertification and drought is also a priority in order to promote sustainable agricultural and rural development.

Platform for the economy: To eradicate corruption by transparency and leadership by example. Increased tax base to ensure equal distribution of tax burden. To create more enterprises that have greater value-added services and products. Improve major infrastructure to provide more jobs for the poor. Urge world trade partners not just to practice free trade but also fair trade. Wants strict accounting of pork barrel. Vows to ensure that tillers, not landlords, are the owners of the lands they till.

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Scandals: Roco has been linked to the coco levy scam; he was said to have fronted for Danding Cojuangco in the use of the levy, declared by the Supreme Court to be public, in taking control of the San Miguel Corporation. He was also accused of allegedly allowing the use by his wife of a government driver.

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Educational attainment: Master in Government Management from the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, military degree from the Philippine Military Academy, and BS Engineering from the Lyceum of the Philippines

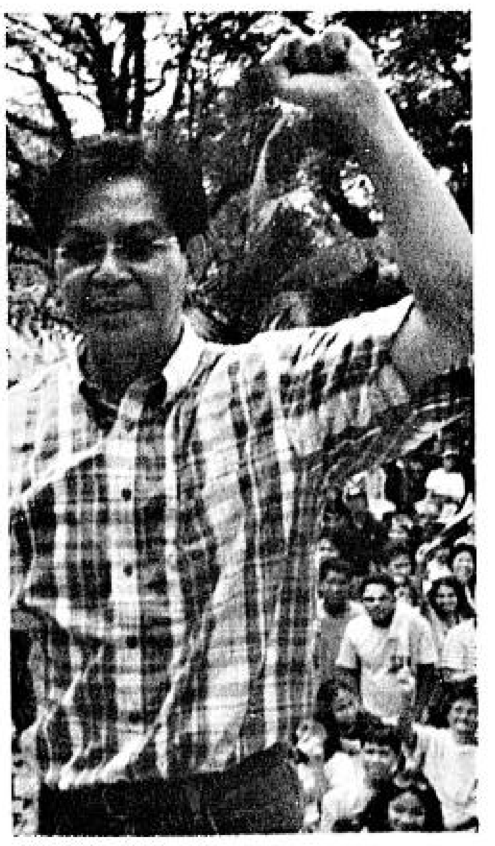
Political experience: Senator for three years, chief of the Philippine National Police for a year, chief of Task Force Habagat of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission for three years, police provincial director in 1992, and commander of the Cebu Metrodiscom for three years

Career highlights: Various awards as an outstanding police officer. Also PMA Outstanding Alumnus Award, and one of the Ten Outstanding Policemen of the Philippines

Running mate: None

Endorser: Robina Gokongwei

Platform for education: To make English the medium of instruction. Also plans to prioritize computer literacy and to use government-owned television networks for education and information, not for propaganda. Promises to ensure 50 percent of public schools would have computers by 2007, and 100 percent by 2010. Promises to ensure a 1:1 book to student ratio.



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Platform for culture and arts: None

Scandals: Who can forget the Kuratong Baleleng rubout case? Lacson also allegedly has million-dollar accounts and properties abroad.

Bro. Eddie Villanueva

Educational attainment: Manager's Course, UP Institute for Small Scale Industries, College of Law (under bar) in UP, and BS Commerce major in Economics, Polytechnic University of the Philippines

Political experience: Nada

Career highlights: None

Running mate: None. We're starting to feel sad for this guy.

Endorsers: Ah, here are a few: Connie Reyes, Kuh Ledesma, Donita Rose, Yoyoy Villame, Angeli Pangilinan-Valenciano, Eddie Mercado, Kata Inocencio and Marlou Aquino

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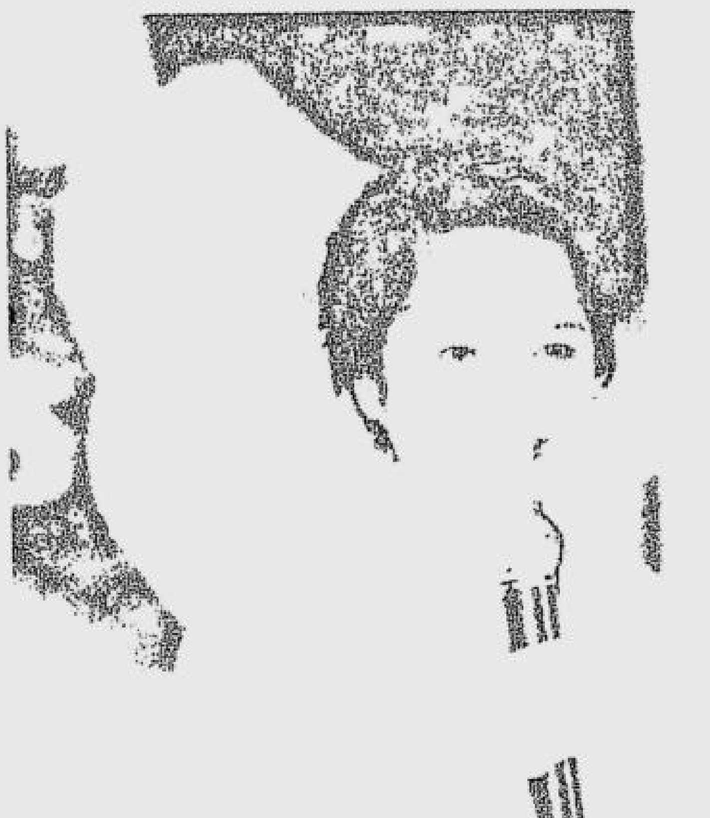

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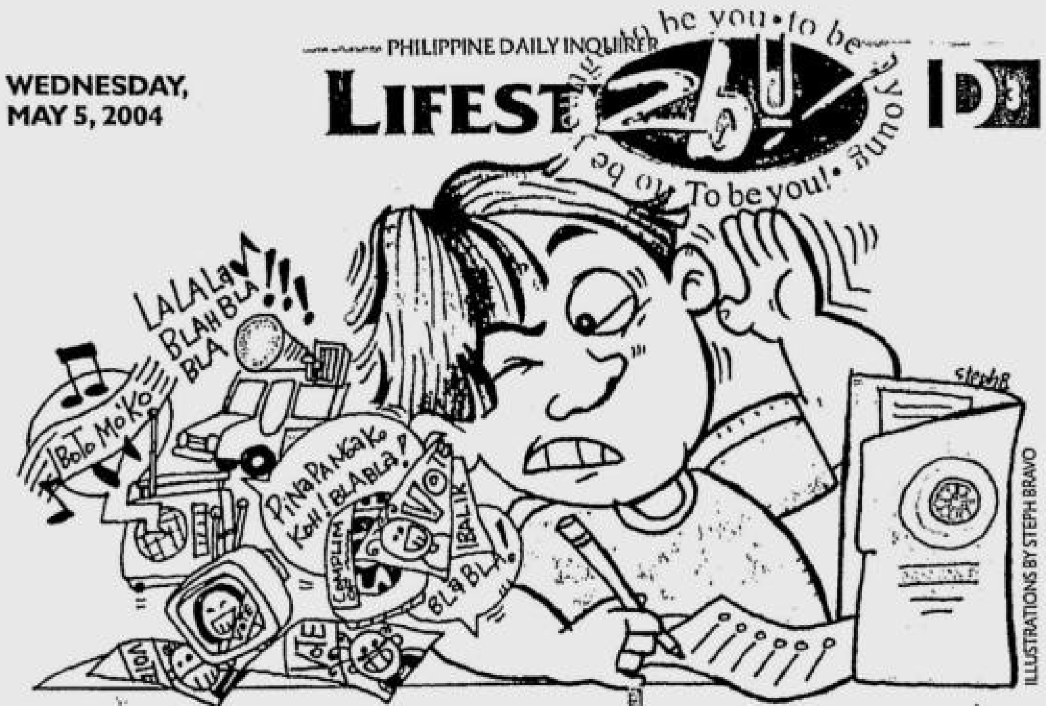


ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPH BRAVO

How to make your vote count, wisely

Democracy requires an intelligent citizenry

By Tammy David and Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondents

WOMEN today may be outraged to learn that the reason they were denied the right of suffrage in America before was a "presumed incapacity for sound reasoning." Only in New Jersey were women allowed to vote. In ancient Greece, only free males were considered citizens and were allowed to vote. Females, whether slaves or not, were not allowed to vote.

If you are 18 years old and above, know this: In colonial America, property qualifications limited the right to vote. In a time when voting was regarded as a privilege instead of a right, only landowners that generated an annual income of at least 40 shillings could participate in the elections. Later, they allowed all property owners over the age of 24 to vote. Some colonies even disfranchised people based on their religion. Dissenting Protestants, Catholics and Jews were prohibited to vote until the late 17th century.

BAHALA NA!
CLAP
KLAP
CLAAP

Voting today is therefore no laughing matter. Check out these tips on voting wisely.

Key questions

"Voting wisely is governed by the questions who, what, why and how. Who are the candidates and what do they stand for? Why do they believe they can improve the sorry condition we are in? And how will they solve the grinding problems of our country?

"Again using the key questions: Who are the influential persons around the candidate? What have they done in the past? Why are they supporting the candidate? Is it because of some good track record, or is it simply winnability? How do they treat their candidate, perhaps as a vehicle to put them back to power? Or as a leader with moral principles that will guide all of their decisions and actions toward the common good?

"Filipino voters as a whole tend to vote wisely and intelligently. It is when they are overwhelmed by cynicism and negativism that they tend to be distracted from the democratic exercise. Their innate logic and common sense are warped by their strong emotions and experiences of the past where they have been disappointed by their choices.

"Unless our political leaders wake up from their self-centered approach in choosing and presenting their candidates based solely on winnability, we will continue to be left with mediocre leaders who will be manipulated by people who have their own agenda which does not dovetail with the common welfare." —**Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.**

Conspiracy of silence

"I agree with the Easter Week statement on the 2004 elections of the University of Santo Tomas titled, 'New Hope, New Politics.' It urges the people to vote wisely by choosing candidates who are competent, committed and compassionate, and to reject the conspiracy of silence by certain celebrity candidates who refuse to explain their platforms of government beyond the merely platitudinous. The nation needs an intelligent democracy, not frivolity and show business."—**Teodoro Lorenzo Fernandez**, student, UST Faculty of Civil Law

"How to vote wisely: 1) Go out to the urban and rural areas. 2) Take note of the homeless, the poor and the uneducated. 3) Reflect on your own dreams and the next six years. 4) Take note of the candidates' platforms. 5) Take your pick. 6) Make the winner deliver on his promises."—**Franco Sarmiento**, 23, Ateneo law student

"Part of voting wisely is consolidating support for a particular candidate to win. It would be great for parties to form coalitions so that their electoral base gets expanded."—**Eleanor G. Uy**, Ateneo Political Science student

"First of all, you have to know the job description of each position. We conducted a survey and most of the respondents didn't know what a senator or the president is supposed to do. Our analogy is how can you vote for the right person for the right position if you don't even know what the position entails. Second, know the candidates. Learn who are going to run, what are their background, platform, educational background, even achievements. Sit and write the things you want the president or a senator to do for yourself and for your country. Try to come up with a matrix."—**Jerry Liao**, votewisely.com

Integral person

"One must vote with the best interests of one's country in mind. To my mind, we must put integral persons in elective positions who will not inordinately seek wealth, especially not at other people's expense. Integral people will use their educational preparation, practical wisdom, native skills, time, efforts and energies to serve the people to the best of their ability."—**Christine Diaz**

"Find out as much as you can about the candidates. Be wary of their ulterior motives. In this farce we call our political system, choosing the lesser evil is the wisest way." - **Walter Ang**, copywriter, Euro RSCG

"By not voting actors, by looking at a candidate's track record, by checking how much she has actually done, and by finding out how she aims to implement peace, justice and progress in practical terms beyond mere motherhood statements. Voting wisely means the voter herself is politically aware. Crime, unemployment, poverty and the new bogeyman called terrorism are just symptoms of an unjust, unbalanced society. Pick candidates who can reform education and foreign policy, and implement sustainable development."—**Sandra Roldan**, instructor, UP Diliman

E-mail the authors at cathy_young1@yahoo.com and tammydavid@mydestiny.net

WHERE TO GO ONLINE

RECOMMENDED site: **www.votewisely.com**

You may have missed the registration period for first-time voters but you can always register at votewisely.com for your voice to be heard.

The site was conceptualized and developed by Net Media right after the Oakwood mutiny last year. "This is the first time OFWs will be able to vote," says Jerry Liao. "We feel online is the best way to reach them and get their feedback. Out of the 7.9 million OFWs, we expected two million. Unfortunately, only 300,000 registered. Hopefully by 2007, more people will have registered."

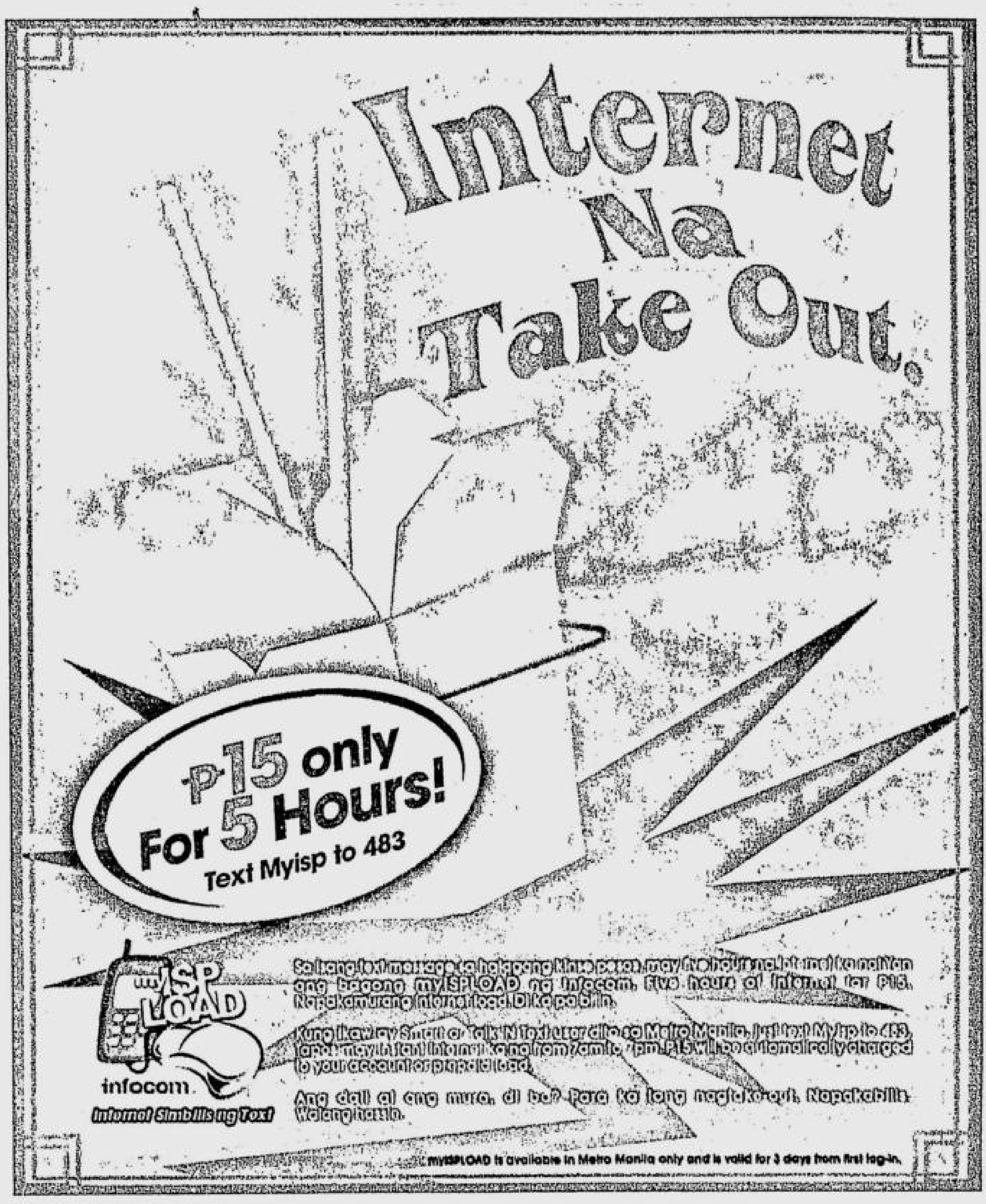
The website features all the information voters need such as job descriptions of the elective positions, frequently asked questions (FAQs), and news and forums on important issues.

Soon votewisely.com will offer a comparison of all the candidates (platform, education background etc.) and the performance of senators and congressmen (how they spent their pork barrel, their attendance record and their voting record).

The website will also form an alliance called "The Road to 2004" with TV, radio, print, online, cable and SMS agencies to share and deliver information to the electorate, here and overseas.

Votewisely.com does not provide guidelines on how to vote wisely, but it provides information that the voter needs to make an intelligent choice.

Tammy David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Kung ikaw ay Smart or Talk 'N Text user dito sa Metro Manila, just text Myisp to 483, tapos may instant Internet ka na from 7am to 7pm. P15 will be automatically charged to your account or prepaid load.
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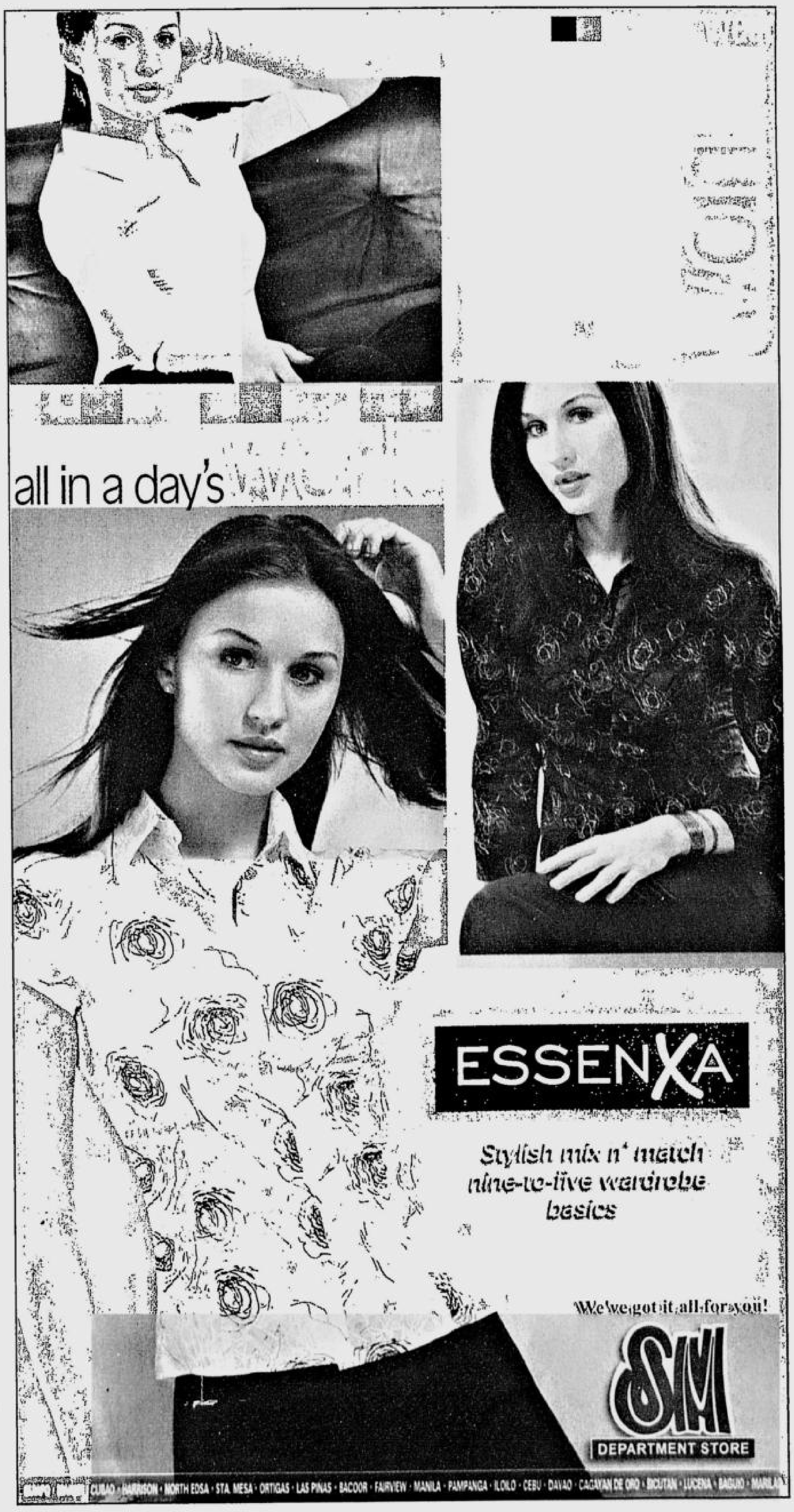
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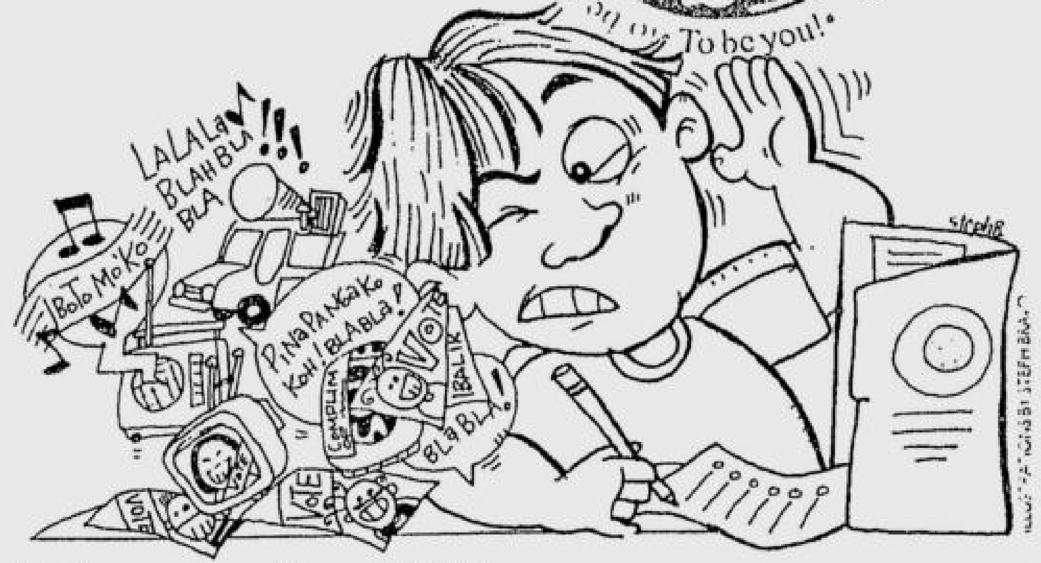

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2bU! Correspondents

WOMEN today may be outraged to learn that the reason they were denied the right of suffrage in America before was a "presumed incapacity for sound reasoning." Only in New Jersey were women allowed to vote. In ancient Greece, only free males were considered citizens and were allowed to vote. Females, whether slaves or not, were not allowed to vote.

If you are 18 years old and above, know this: In colonial America, property qualifications limited the right to vote. In a time when voting was regarded as a privilege instead of a right, only landowners that generated an annual income of at least 40 shillings could participate in the elections. Later, they allowed all property owners over the age of 24 to vote. Some colonies even disfranchised people based on their religion. Dissenting Protestants, Catholics and Jews were prohibited to vote until the late 17th century.

BaHALA NA!
CLAP
KLAP
CLAAP

Voting today is therefore no laughing matter. Check out these tips on voting wisely.

Key questions

"Voting wisely is governed by the questions who, what, why and how. Who are the candidates and what do they stand for? Why do they believe they can improve the sorry condition we are in? And how will they solve the grinding problems of our country?

"Again using the key questions: Who are the influential persons around the candidate? What have they done in the past? Why are they supporting the candidate? Is it because of some good track record, or is it simply winnability? How do they treat their candidate, perhaps as a vehicle to put them back to power? Or as a leader with moral principles that will guide all of their decisions and actions toward the common good?

"Filipino voters as a whole tend to vote wisely and intelligently. It is when they are overwhelmed by cynicism and negativism that they tend to be distracted from the democratic exercise. Their innate logic and common sense are warped by their strong emotions and experiences of the past where they have been disappointed by their choices.

"Unless our political leaders wake up from their self-centered approach in choosing and presenting their candidates based solely on winnability, we will continue to be left with mediocre leaders who will be manipulated by people who have their own agenda which does not dovetail with the common welfare."
–Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.

Conspiracy of silence

"I agree with the Laster Week statement on the 2004 elections of the University of Santo Tomas titled, 'New Hope, New Politics.' It urges the people to vote wisely by choosing candidates who are competent, committed and compassionate, and to reject the conspiracy of silence by certain celebrity candidates who refuse to explain their platforms of government beyond the merely platitudinous. The nation needs an intelligent democracy, not frivolity and show business." –Teodoro Lorenzo Fernandez, student, UST Faculty of Civil Law

"How to vote wisely: 1) Go out to the urban and rural areas. 2) Take note of the homeless, the poor and the uneducated. 3) Reflect on your own dreams and the next six years. 4) Take note of the candidates' platforms. 5) Take your pick. 6) Make the winner deliver on his promises." –Franco Sarmiento, 23, Ateneo law student

"Part of voting wisely is consolidating support for a particular candidate to win. It would be great for parties to form coalitions so that their electoral base gets expanded." –Eleanor G. Uy, Ateneo Political Science

"First of all, you have to know the job description of each position. We conducted a survey and most of the respondents didn't know what a senator or the president is supposed to do. Our analogy is how can you vote for the right person for the right position if you don't even know what the position entails. Second, know the candidates. Learn who are going to run, what are their background, platform, educational background, even achievements. Sit and write the things you want the president or a senator to do for yourself and for your country. Try to come up with a matrix." –Jerry Liao, votewisely.com

Integral person

One must vote with the best interests of one's country in mind. To my mind, we must put integral persons in elective positions who will not inordinately seek wealth, especially not at other people's expense. Integral people will use their educational preparation, practical wisdom, native skills, time, efforts and energies to serve the people to the best of their ability." –Christine Diaz

"Find out as much as you can about the candidates. Be wary of their ulterior motives. In this farce we call our political system choosing the lesser evil is the wisest way." Walter Ang, copywriter, Euro RSCG

"By not voting actors, by looking at a candidate's track record, by checking how much she has actually done, and by finding out how she aims to implement peace, justice and progress in practical terms beyond mere motherhood statements. Voting wisely mean the voter herself is politically aware. Crime, unemployment, poverty and the new bogeyman called terrorism are just symptoms of an unjust, unbalanced society. Pick candidates who can reform education and foreign policy, and implement sustainable development." Sandra Roldan, instructor, UP Diliman

E-mail the authors at cathy_young16@yahoo.com and tammydavid@mydestiny.net

GO ONLINE

RECOMMENDED site: www.votewisely.com

You may have missed the registration period for first-time voters but you can always register at votewisely.com for your voice to be heard.

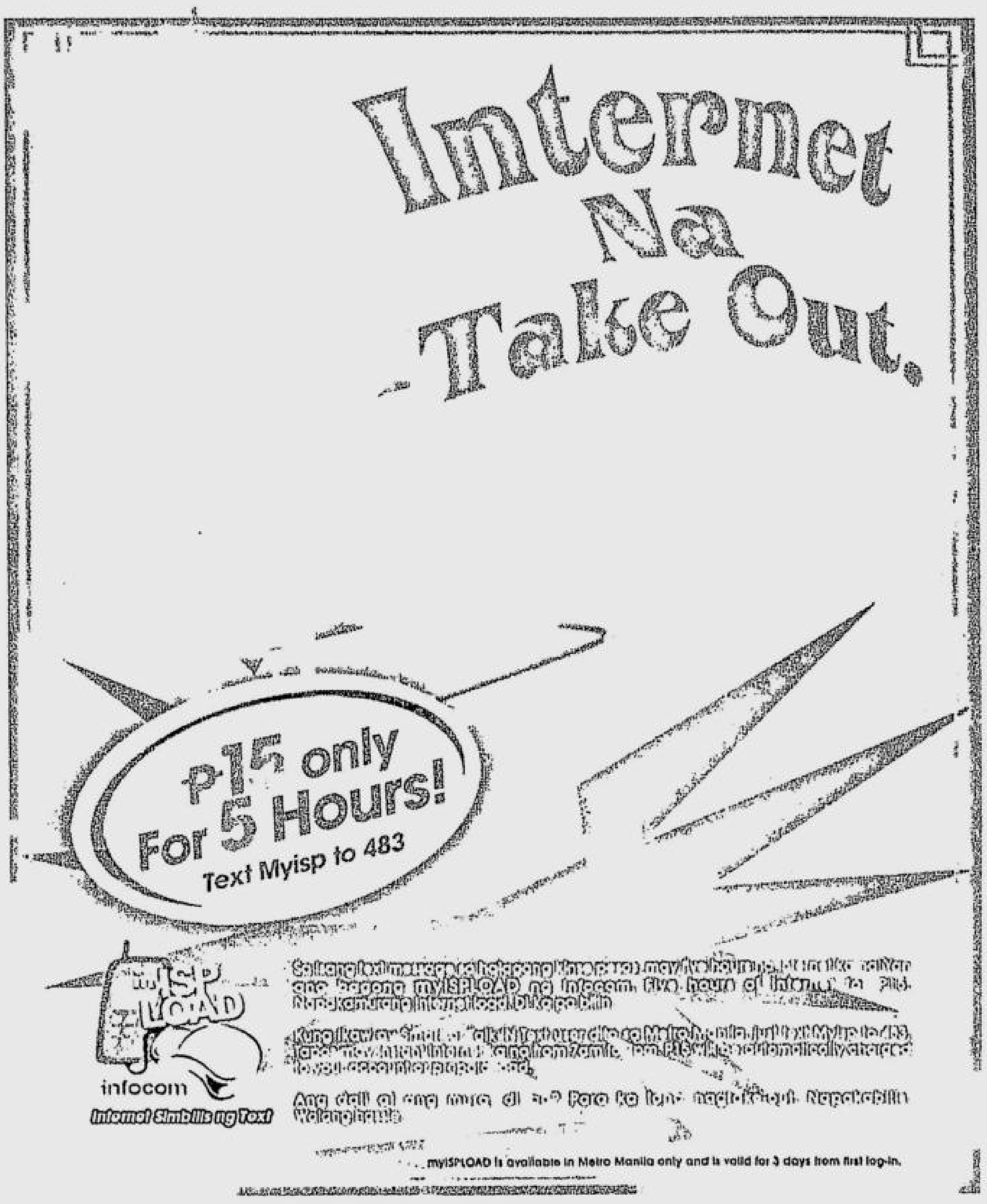
The site was conceptualized and developed by Net Media right after the Oakwood mutiny last year. "This is the first time OFWs will be able to vote," says Jerry Liao. "We feel online is the best way to reach them and get their feedback. Out of the 7.9 million OFWs, we expected two million. Unfortunately, only 300,000 registered. Hopefully by 2007, more people will have registered."

The website features all the information voters need such as job descriptions of the elective positions, frequently asked questions (FAQs), and news and forums on important issues.

Soon votewisely.com will offer a comparison of all the candidates (platform, education background etc.) and the performance of senators and congressmen (how they spent their pork barrel, their attendance record and their voting record).

The website will also form an alliance called "The Road to 2004" with TV, radio, print, online, cable and SMS agencies to share and deliver information to the electorate, here and overseas.

Votewisely.com does not provide guidelines on how to vote wisely, but it provides information that the voter needs to make an intelligent choice.
Tammy David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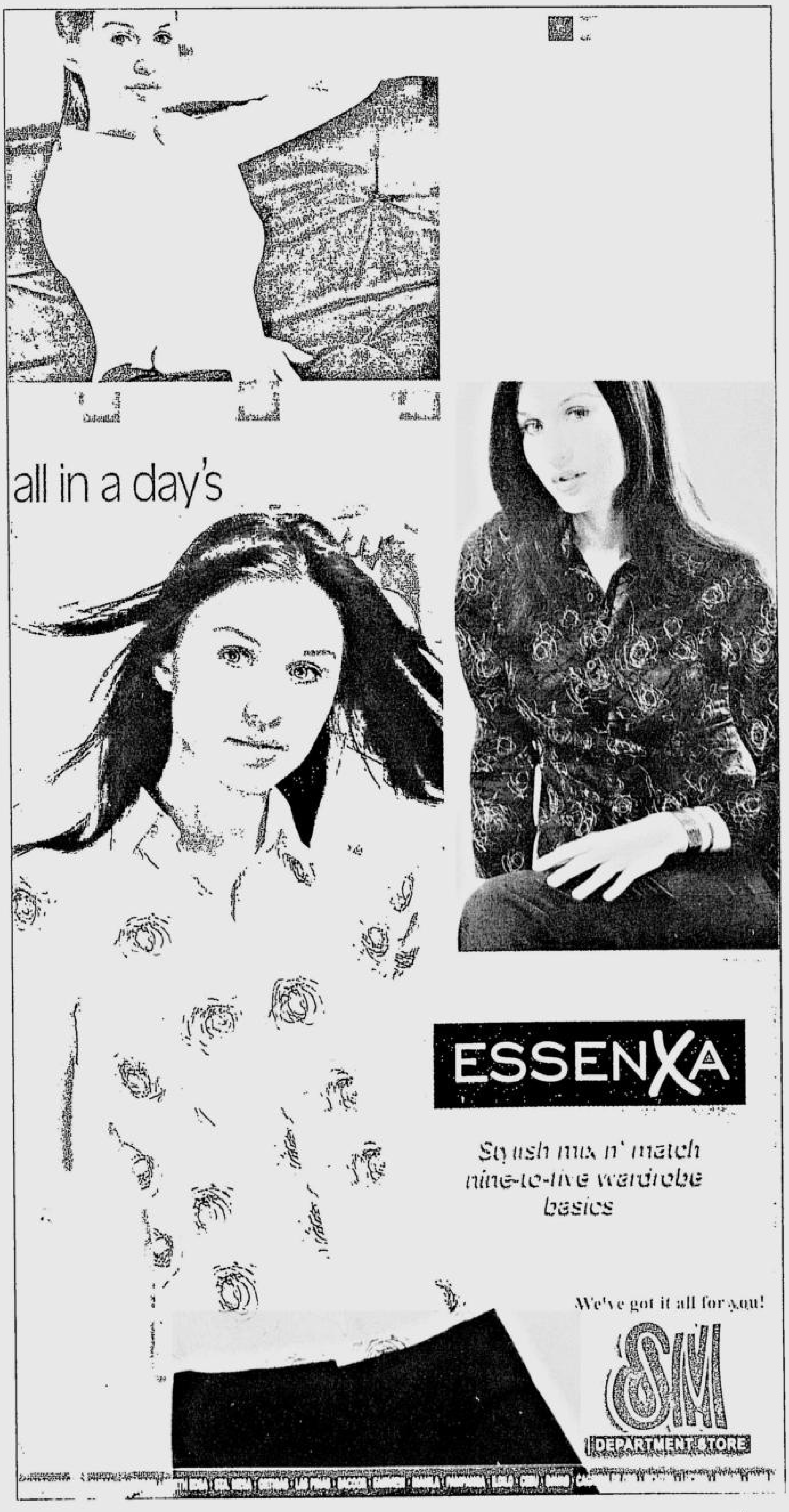
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Wanted: Perfect President

By Sam Refran
2bU! Correspondent

What qualities do you seek in a president?

SO WHAT exactly makes a good president? What qualities should a candidate possess to be qualified for the highest position in the country? In this survey, the youths make their voice heard.

A great president should possess strong will, love for his nation, pride for his country, generosity, selflessness, respect for people and fear of God.—**Adrian, 18**

Someone who knows what he is doing, finished school, has had an experience in public service, (someone) who is a servant-leader like Christ! Someone who would be able to 'fix' the Philippines!—**Phoebe, 18, ADMU**

Someone who works hard to improve the country rather than impress its people.—**Farahmei, 17, ADMU**

My ideal president is a person of morality, wisdom, spirituality and practicality. Someone strong enough to stay brave for our country, someone with integrity, and someone with great love for our country.—**Sophia Uy, 20, DLSU**

A good president has to have the three C's… courage, confidence and charisma. —**Gelo Lao, 19, UA&P**

A good president should have vision, competence and conscience.—**Ryan Reyes, UST**

An ideal president should have a sense of humor, a heart and the passion to serve.—**Lorlegs, 19**

God-fearing.—**Joanna, 19, ADMU**

Dapat may dignity and integrity. Someone who has a clean track record.—**Melody Laogan**

My ideal president is someone who's smart, who thinks by himself and not rely on his advisers, God-fearing, at least a college graduate (he has to know a lot of things, you know), honest, kind-hearted and dignified enough to earn the respect and support of the people and the officials of other countries as well. *Ok lang kahit medyo mainitin ulo, basta nasa tamang lugar at sa tamang dahilan.*—**Paolo Angelo Ebora, 17, ADMU**

I want somebody who loves this country more than he/she loves his/herself.—**K-wey**

Someone who'll be able to fulfill his promises to the people and who'll do anything to help the country and not only himself.—**Angel, 18, UA&P**

My ideal president would be one who would be honest enough not to have to dye his/her hair and show its true color. Same goes for toupees and wigs. Kidding aside, my ideal president should be intelligent, and intellectual, and willing to learn more for the betterment of the nation.—**Nikki Blanco, 17**

The position of the presidency is not a theatrical travesty. The Filipinos deserve to have a president who is honorable, dignified and much more willing to serve and not to be served…"—**domeng_yfc**

The next president should have the best qualities of the best Philippine presidents—the perseverance of Emilio Aguinaldo, the drama and flair of Manuel Quezon, the unwavering decency of Sergio Osmeña Sr., the infrastructure vision of Elpidio Qurino, the *masa* touch of Ramon Magsaysay, the scholarship and economic vision of Diosdado Macapagal, the democratic steadfastness of Cory Aquino and the steadiness of Fidel Ramos.—**Alder Almo, UST Ecclesiastical Faculties**

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Read me! Read me! And then vote for me!

Given the chance to run for public office, what would your campaign slogan be?

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

ELECTIONS are pretty much like show biz. It greatly involves image-making, presentation and marketing—the way supposedly talented wannabes are launched into the crazy planet of stardom.

Apart from clothes, a platform and a good manager or adviser, yet another essential aspect of elections is the slogan. Be it a heart-beat-stopping word, a catchy phrase or even a lengthy line complete with a rhyme, the slogan is something that sells the candidate by letting the voters know what he's all about.

It is the battle cry, philosophy, goal, promise or motto that will hopefully make a good impact on the voters, winning them to the candidate's side.

While existing slogans run from the seriously blah to the poetically conceived, from the impressively catchy to the downright hilarious, here are even more doses from young denizens of this politics-crazy land.

Chico Pamintuan, *Pinto sa Kinabukasan.* I like. Savior *na* savior *ang dating!*—**Chico Pamintuan, 21, loves chico**

Poverty is evil so my slogan would be *"Kay* Doydoy, *walang purdoy!"*—**Ricky Doydoy, 24, was once poor**

Catoto, Katoto. As simple as that.—**Art Catoto, 23, likes watching "Art is Kool"**

Vote wisely! Vote for Wesley!—**Wesley V., 23, will not vote because he wasn't able to get registered**

What the world needs now is… Love, Sweet Love. —**Love S., 27, knows that her answer is so *baduy***

Kayang-kaya with Bianca! Because I want to empower people especially women. Pero when it comes to good things *lang ha.* —**Bianca Machitar, 26**

Kay Mata, *lalaki ang kita!* That's more of a promise I can't fulfill, just like a lot of politicians out there.—**Raphael Mata, 24**

You have a mate with Jasmin Mate!—**Jasmin Mate, 22, though she thinks it sounds a little lewd**

Jan jan jan jan… Janbie! *Laging andyan! Anong say ni* Jamby dyan?—**Janbie, 18, loves the Jamby jingle**

Did somebody use "*Kakampi ng naaapi* "already? Something like that. Something with *kabalikat* or ally in it.—**Ryan Castor, 18**

Panalo 'tong sagot ko. "We have a winner here!" or "Choose the winner!"—**Nani Manalo, 17**

Dream. Believe. Survive. Vote. For Weng Weng Tumbaga. I'm sure *hakot ko ang* young voters!—**Weng Weng Tumbaga, 19, loves Christian Esteban**

Okay sa senado, Ocay for senate! Or "OK *si* Ocay *para sa senado." Ok ba?* – **Marj Ocay, 23**

Wag madehado, iboto si Acelajado. That's the only rhyming word I could find. — **Ricci Mae Acelajado, 25**

Walang imposible kay Apacible!!!—**Ginger, whose last name is not Apacible. Her boyfriend Is the Apacible.**

Rain or shine, you can count on Rainore!!! Corny!!! —**Rainore R., 24**

Kay kakamping Ampi, *walang api.* —**Ampi, 29**

Numero uno si Romero.—**Chie Romero**

Kakampi. Kapuso. Kapamilya.—**Kap Jaula, 28, likes GMA 7 more than ABS-CBN**

The Vice with no vice. —**Ate Deng, 26**

Idol ko si Kat.—**Kat Berenguela, 27, thinks Bong Revilla is a cutie who has too many kids**

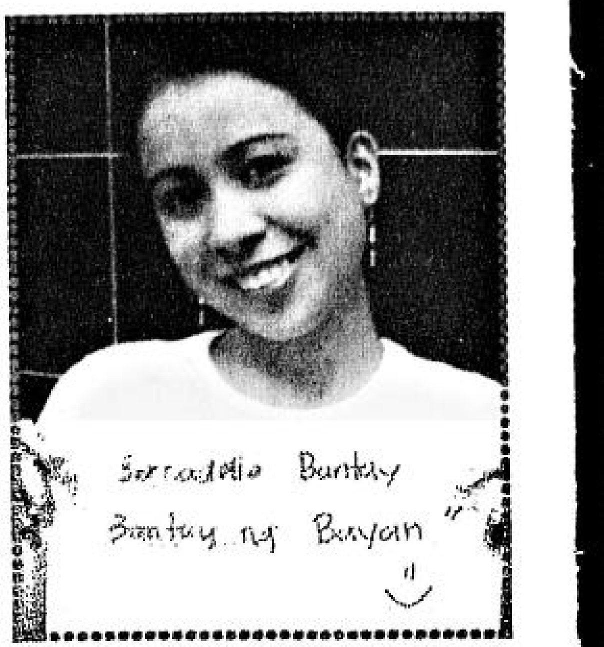
Kasama ng masa. Kabalikat, kakampi. Kahit ano. You know how stupid and gullible some people are. They'll buy it. —**Tony Chacha**

Totoong tao.—**Toto, 22**

There is hope with Hope.—**Hope May M., 23, doesn't smoke Hope**

Whatever you want me to be. —**Tracy, 16**

Kasama ng masa, makamasa.—**Makamasa Gapit**



***BANTAY** ng Bayan*—**Bernadette Bantay**

***BIBILIB** ka!*—**Gemelyn Borja, 19**

TAPAT SA SALITA
HINDI

***TAPAT** sa salita pero hindi puro salita,* **Ms. Action.—Niña, 24**

VOTE for me or else…—Starlet Sanchez, 16

Tell 2bU! about your mom

BE a part of our Mother's Day issue.

We invite you to tell our readers about your mom—or even your life as a young mom.

Please feel free to send in entries from your journal, pages from real scrapbooks, e-mail or text exchanges, photographs, poetry, songs, essays, greeting cards—anything about motherhood.

It doesn't have to be about your biological mom. If you feel that your father, grandparents, your friend, your teacher or even your boss has mothered you, tell us about that too.

Let us into your world.

Let's make this Mother's Day one to be remembered.

Send your submissions to ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph by May 8, 3 p.m.

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FOR the love of the scene. Tuck Cheah aka DJ TC

LOVE ko 'to. DJs David Jacob and Manolet Dario

LOVE 'em all. Nicky Jurado pumps up the after-party crowd

Big love, big hair

Tim Yap

"IT'S STILL not close to what we want—but we're very thankful for the attendance and support," said DJ **Tuck Cheah**, aka TC, who has been opening for almost all the big global DJ acts in Manila for the past four years. Last Saturday, he was the headliner of the Big Fish "Big Love" party at The Tent.

Why "Big Love"? Well, simply put, the event was a big labor of love that got together all the top local DJs in one giant venue —which is rare in this side of town where foreign DJs are the top crowd drawers.

Half-full or half-empty? TC, the Big Fish dance scene mover, chooses to look at the bright side and expresses gratitude to the thousand-strong audience of hard-core partyphiles who waved their fists in the air to the sound of homegrown DJ talents **Marc** and **Jon Naval, Manolet Dario, David Jacob** and **Nicky Jurado.**

Hed Kandy were supposed to occupy last Saturday's slot, but since they had postponed their Manila coming, the Big Fish dudes decided to get the local acts together. With two weeks to promote the affair, and without any sponsor, they were still able to pull it off (with special thanks to suppliers Stagecraft and Marquee), even if the numbers didn't really compare to their usual jam-packed events.

My analysis of the situation? We all know that our local soundmeisters are equally, if not more, talented than the big names—but sometimes, they are not given the right exposure. DJs should start seeing themselves as stars—be able to choose their gigs, come out with innovative tracks and a distinct sound, think big!

Why will a regular partyphile pay P400 at the gate if he can go to a random gig at a bar, for free? The DJ should offer something more special than a regular gig—to lift up the vibe 100 times more.

Timing-wise, the Labor Day weekend brought a lot of hard-core party dandies out of town, while those who

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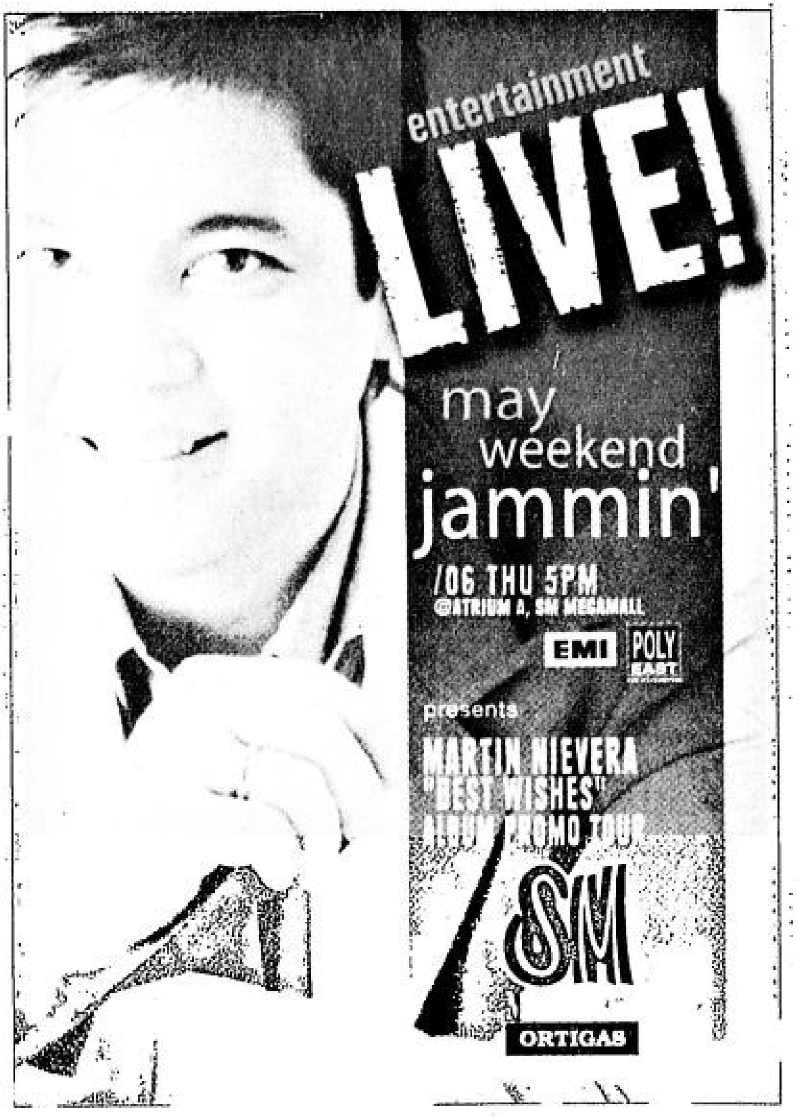

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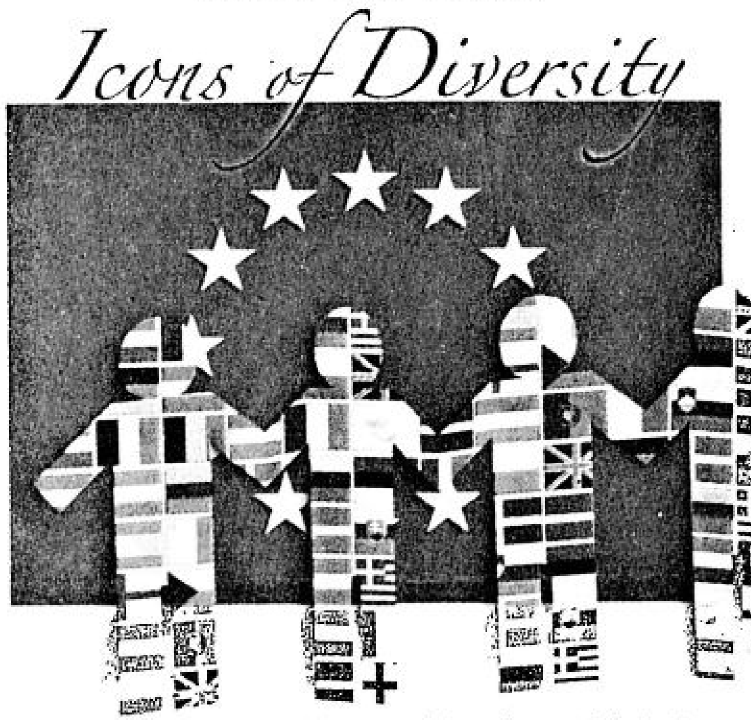

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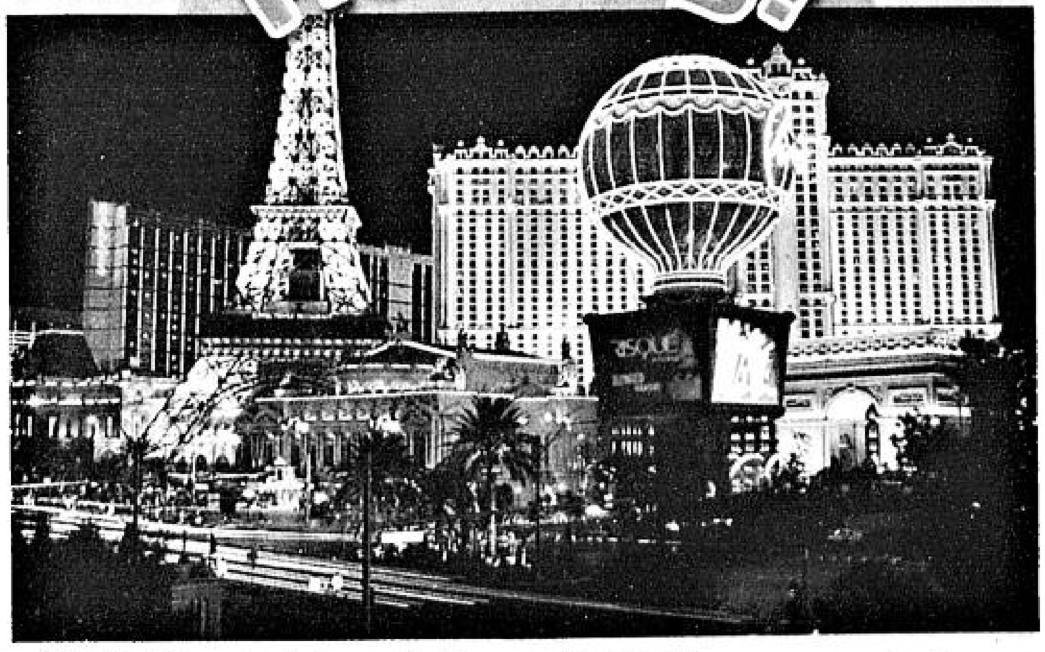

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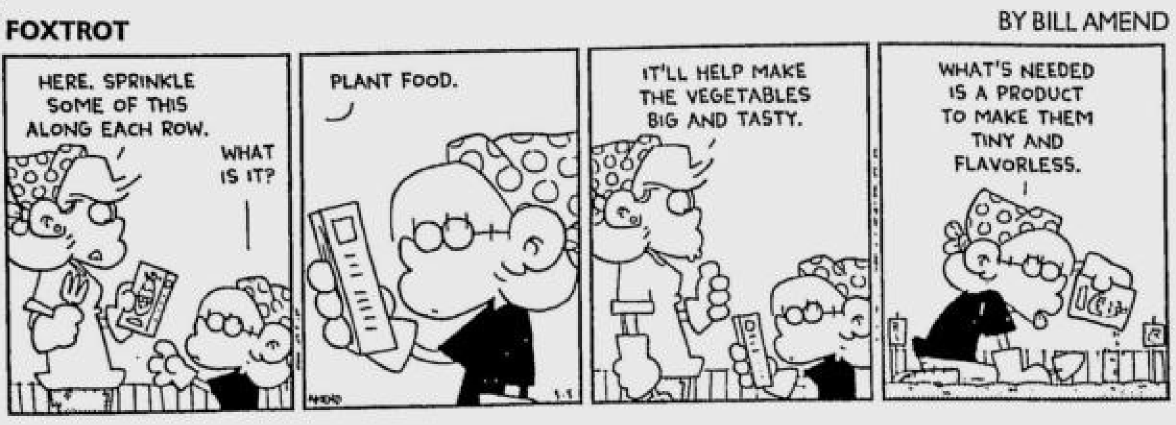
WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2004

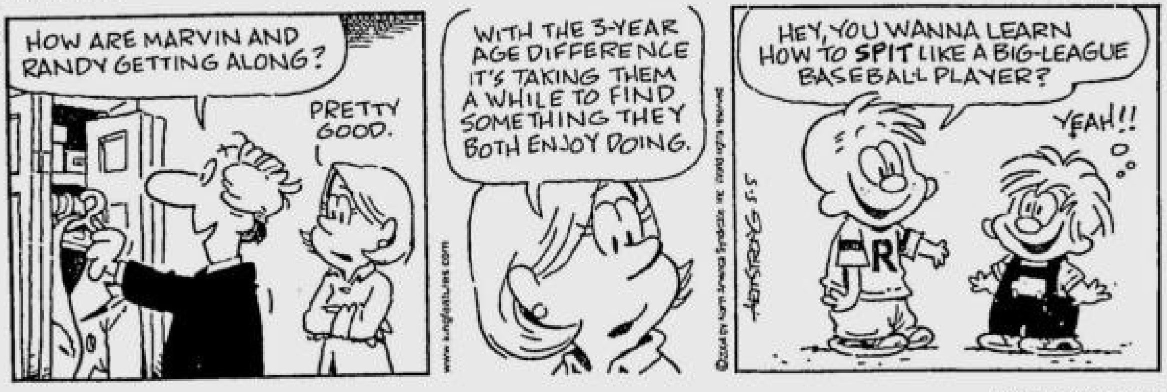
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


HERE. SPRINKLE SOME OF THIS ALONG EACH ROW.
WHAT IS IT?
PLANT FOOD.
IT'LL HELP MAKE THE VEGETABLES BIG AND TASTY.
WHAT'S NEEDED IS A PRODUCT TO MAKE THEM TINY AND FLAVORLESS.

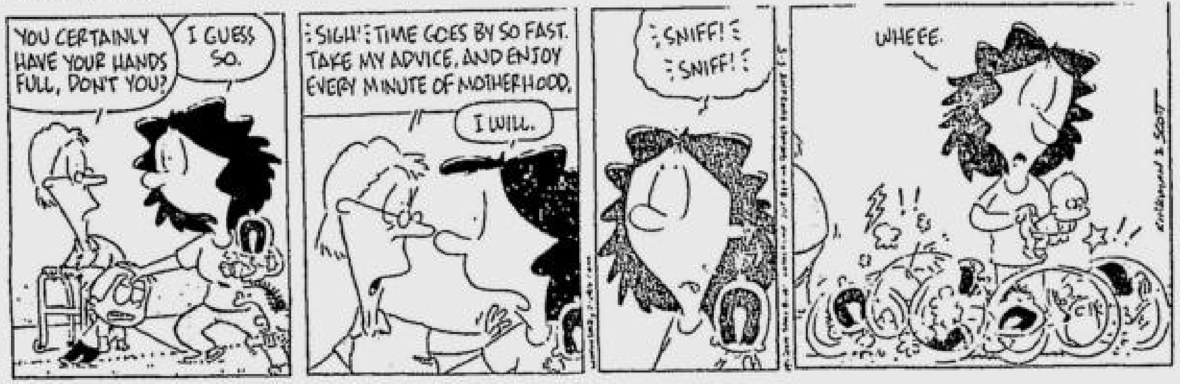
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


HOW ARE MARVIN AND RANDY GETTING ALONG?
PRETTY GOOD.
WITH THE 3-YEAR AGE DIFFERENCE IT'S TAKING THEM A WHILE TO FIND SOMETHING THEY BOTH ENJOY DOING.
HEY, YOU WANNA LEARN HOW TO SPIT LIKE A BIG-LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYER?
YEAH!!

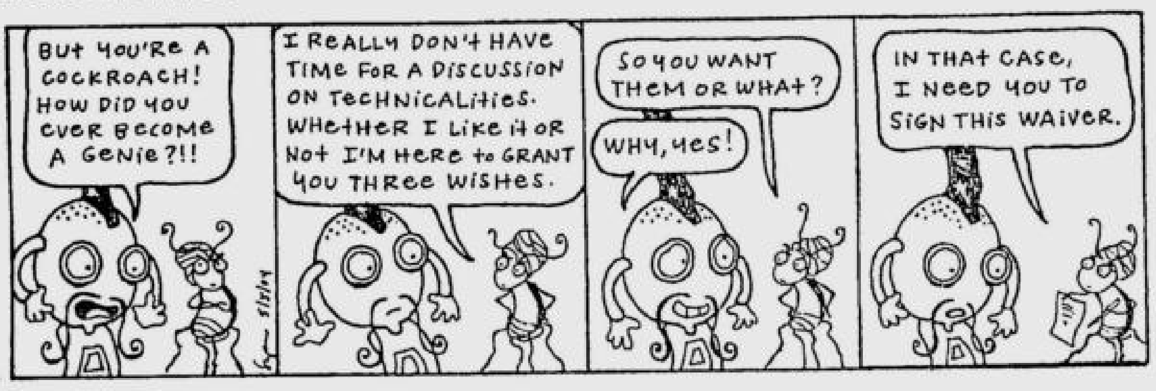
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


YOU CERTAINLY HAVE YOUR HANDS FULL, DON'T YOU?
I GUESS SO.
SIGH! TIME GOES BY SO FAST. TAKE MY ADVICE, AND ENJOY EVERY MINUTE OF MOTHERHOOD.
I WILL.
SNIFF! SNIFF!
WHEEE.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


But you're a cockroach! How did you ever become a genie?!!
I really don't have time for a discussion on technicalities. Whether I like it or not I'm here to grant you three wishes.
So you want them or what?
Why, yes!
In that case, I need you to sign this waiver.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a smooth, confident flair. You're very convincing. You know how to offer valuable advice to others. Because of this you often educate and influence people. (You think deeply about things.) Expect increased solitude this year, because you are going to study more or learn something important. You need to prepare for 2005.
Birthdate of: Tammy Wynette, singer; Karl Marx, social scientist; Ann B. Davis, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be very careful about shopping or spending your money today. An element of confusion exists in the air. In addition to this, you're tempted by luxury!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your energy level might be markedly lower than usual today. Therefore, don't push yourself. Conversations with bosses might be confusing. Go gently, dear Taurus.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): If you feel worried today or discouraged about something—don't take this mood seriously. (Neptune is murky, vague and full of smoke and mirrors.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): The effort required to help a friend today might be too much for you to easily handle. Be kind to yourself. If you don't take care of yourself first, you won't be able to help anyone!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Conversations with parents or authority figures are highly confusing today. You're not sure what is expected of you. Because of this, don't act. Just wait.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): It's all right to give somebody a hand at work today, but don't overextend yourself. In turn, don't expect too much from others either. People are inclined to go overboard about things today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your appreciation of beauty is heightened today. You might dream up all sorts of artistic, creative concepts. You're in touch with your muse!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Be direct, clear and forthright in all your communications with family members and partners today. You might be tempted to be sly in order to avoid something. You can't pull this off.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might feel tired at work or even discouraged about your abilities. Ignore these feelings. They are false! You are as good today as you were last week.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might fall in love today or develop a crush on someone. Take these feelings with a grain of salt. Mushy confusion is inherent in everything today. Be careful.

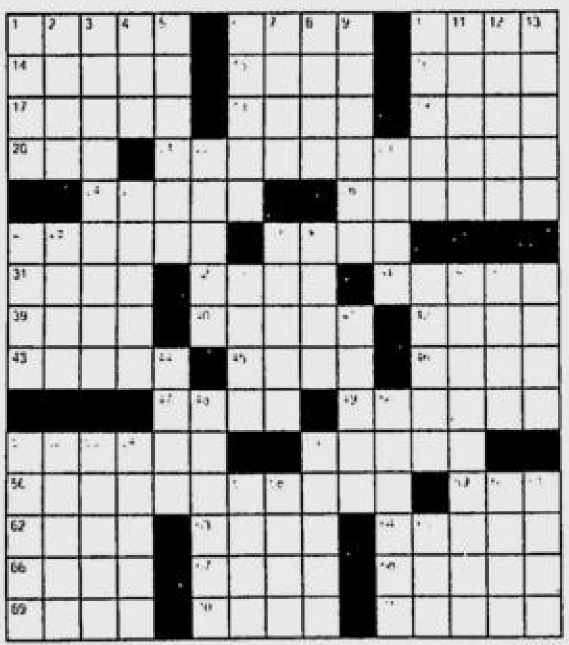
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Feelings of inadequacy can make you doubt yourself. You want to avoid direct contact with someone. The truth is: Everyone feels self-doubting, incompetent and completely hopeless at times.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Be extra-clear in all your communications today. It's easy to confuse the gap between your ideals and reality. (And you know how idealistic you can be!)

DAILY CROSSWORD

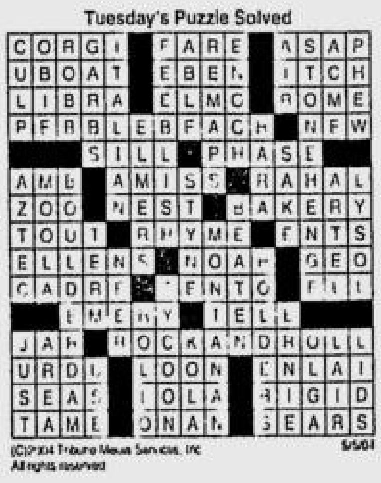
ACROSS
1 Center
6 Health resorts
10 Building wings
14 Misconception
15 Infield cover
16 Jacob's first wife
17 Members of the flock
18 Previously
19 One Corleone
20 Fast Internet connection
21 Had an eye-opening experience
24 Coffee house order
26 Menu choices
27 Performer or painter
29 Methods
31 Deliberate misstatements
32 Golden calf
34 Kind of bear
39 List-shortening abbr.
40 __ and whey
42 Large sandwich
43 Desert mount
45 Wolfgang's spouse
46 With in Arles
47 Inconclusive
49 Window problem
51 Tasty seed
55 Sajak's spin
56 Rodgers' partner
59 Naughty
62 Pronto letters
63 2000 candidate
64 Coliseum center
66 Wooded hollow
67 Frosted
68 Thoroughly unpleasant
69 Model Macpherson
70 Just gets by
71 French heads

DOWN
1 Canasta combo
2 Gershwin and
3 Precision performers
4 Drunkard
5 Assignations
6 Author of "Dred"
7 Breathe heavily
8 Part of the foot
9 Rapid
10 Singer Costello
11 Janet of "Psycho"
12 Shaping machine
13 Inoculations
22 Top floor
23 Speak like Sylvester
25 Theater channel
27 Actor Baldwin
28 Singer Coolidge
29 Persistent doubt
30 "M*A*S*H" star
33 Backside
35 Chicago airport
36 Utmost effort
38 Actor Hudson
41 Japanese dish
44 Tart citrus
48 Duchess of York, casually
50 Renter
51 Shadow cast
52 Painter's tripod
54 Enough
55 Garden woes
57 Slug
58 Genealogist's diagram
60 Feed the pot
61 Parts of weeks
65 Arctic explorer



By Norma Steinberg
San Francisco, CA
5/5/04

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



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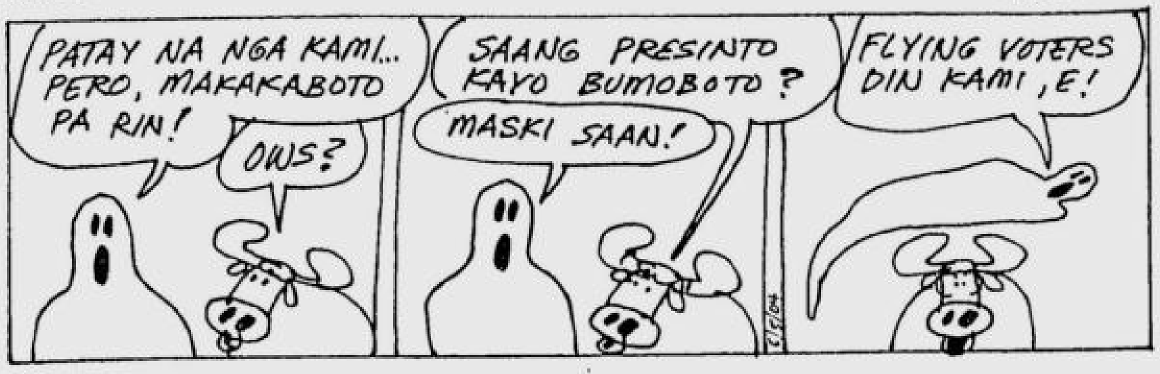
5/5/04

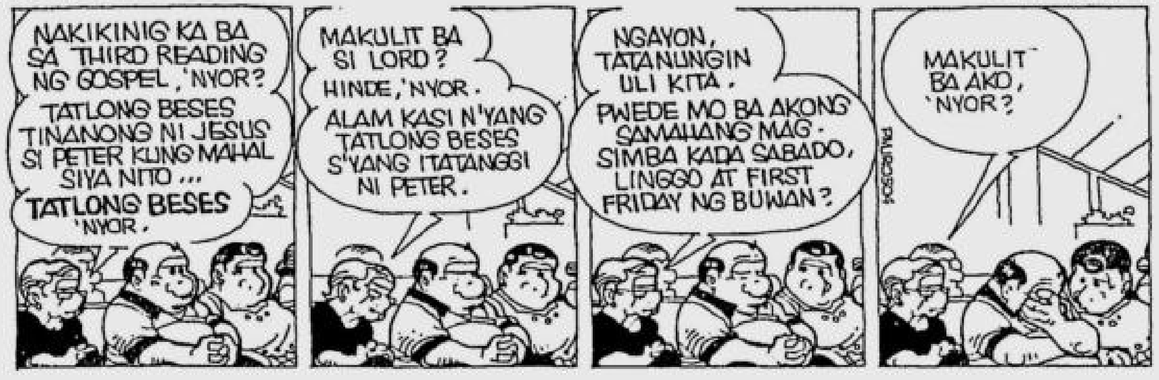
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PATAY NA NGA KAMI... PERO, MAKAKABOTO PA RIN!
OWS?
SAANG PRESINTO KAYO BUMOBOTO?
MASKI SAAN!
FLYING VOTERS DIN KAMI, E!

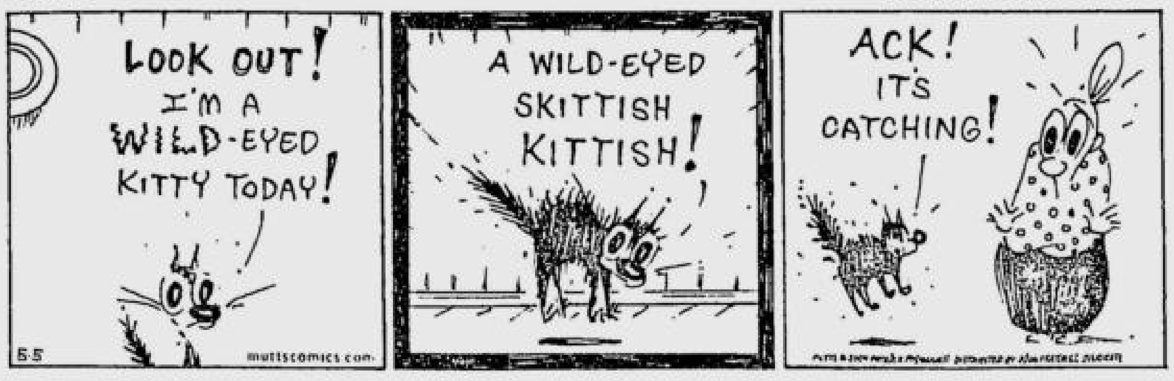
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAKIKINIG KA BA SA THIRD READING NG GOSPEL, 'NYOR?
TATLONG BESES TINANONG NI JESUS SI PETER KUNG MAHAL SIYA NITO ...
TATLONG BESES 'NYOR.
MAKULIT BA SI LORD?
HINDE, 'NYOR.
ALAM KASI N'YANG TATLONG BESES S'YANG ITATANGGI NI PETER.
NGAYON, TATANUNGIN ULI KITA.
PWEDE MO BA AKONG SAMAHANG MAG-SIMBA KADA SABADO, LINGGO AT FIRST FRIDAY NG BUWAN?
MAKULIT BA AKO, 'NYOR?

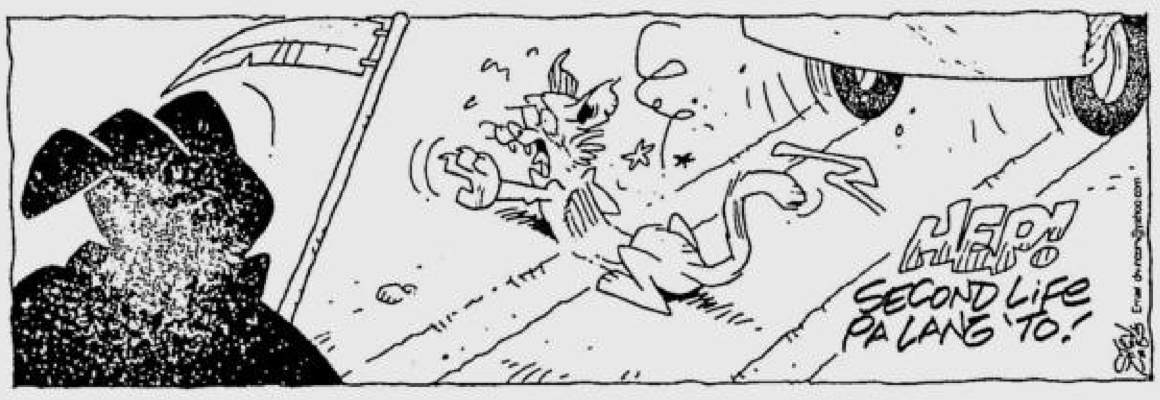
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


LOOK OUT! I'M A WILD-EYED KITTY TODAY!
A WILD-EYED SKITTISH KITTISH!
ACK! IT'S CATCHING!
5.5
muttscomics.com

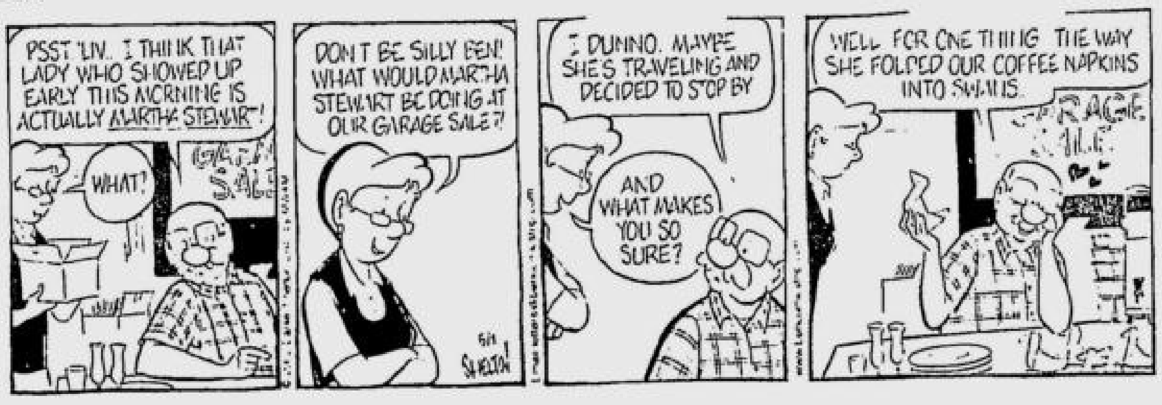
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


HELP!
SECOND LIFE PA LANG 'TO!

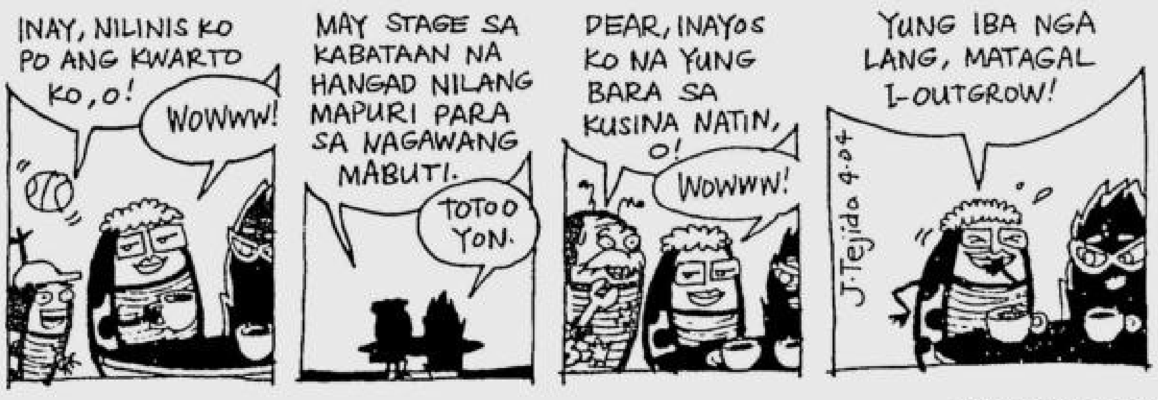
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


PSST 'LIV... I THINK THAT LADY WHO SHOWED UP EARLY THIS MORNING IS ACTUALLY MARTHA STEWART!
WHAT?
DON'T BE SILLY BEN! WHAT WOULD MARTHA STEWART BE DOING AT OUR GARAGE SALE?
I DUNNO. MAYBE SHE'S TRAVELING AND DECIDED TO STOP BY
AND WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE?
WELL FOR ONE THING THE WAY SHE FOLDED OUR COFFEE NAPKINS INTO SWANS.
GARAGE SALE

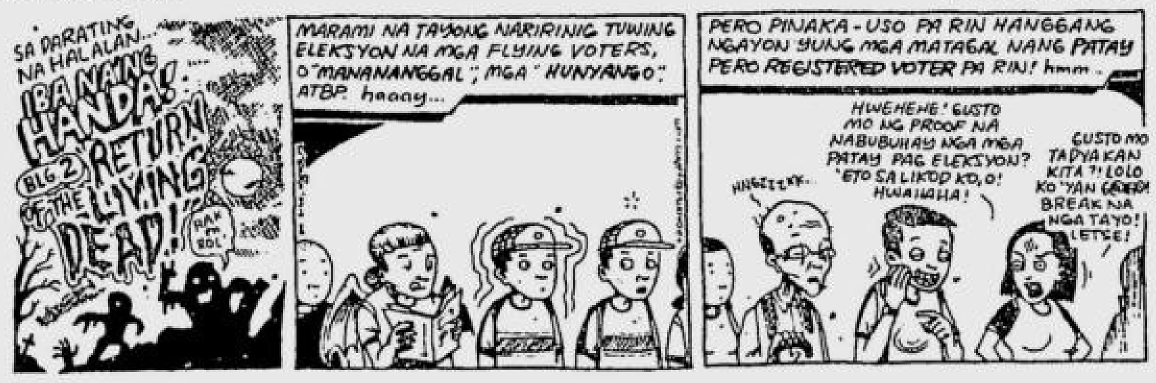
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


INAY, NILINIS KO PO ANG KWARTO KO, O!
WOWWW!
MAY STAGE SA KABATAAN NA HANGAD NILANG MAPURI PARA SA NAGAWANG MABUTI.
TOTOO YON.
DEAR, INAYOS KO NA YUNG BARA SA KUSINA NATIN, O!
WOWWW!
YUNG IBA NGA LANG, MATAGAL I-OUTGROW!
J. Tejido 4-04

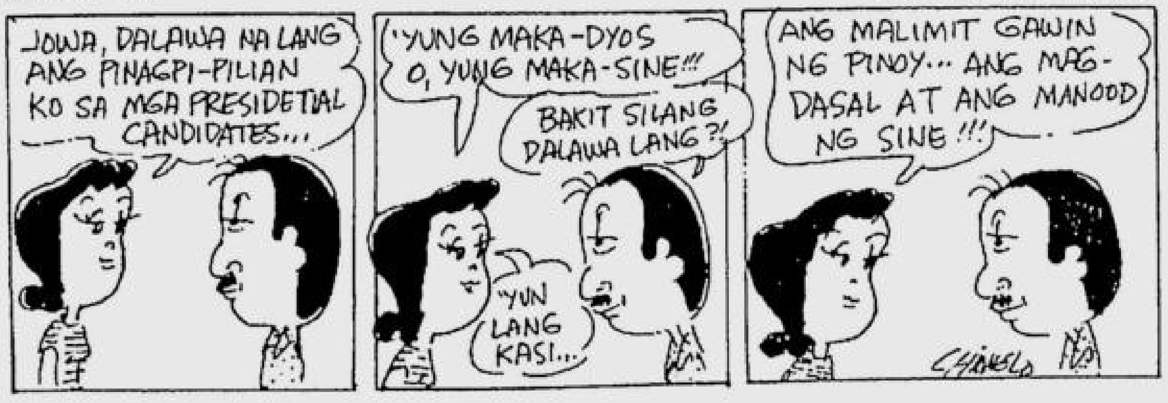
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


SA DARATING NA HALALAN...
IBA NA NG HANDA!
BLG 2
RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD!
MARAMI NA TAYONG NARIRINIG TUWING ELEKSYON NA MGA FLYING VOTERS, O "MANANANGGAL", MGA "HUNYANGO", ATBP. haaay...
PERO PINAKA-USO PA RIN HANGGANG NGAYON YUNG MGA MATAGAL NANG PATAY PERO REGISTERED VOTER PA RIN! hmm...
HIHIHIIII...
HWEHEHE! GUSTO MO NG PROOF NA NABUBUHAY NGA MGA PATAY PAG ELEKSYON? 'ETO SA LIKOD KO, O! HWAHAHA!
GUSTO MO TADYAKAN KITA?! LOLO KO 'YAN BREAK NA NGA TAYO! LETSE!

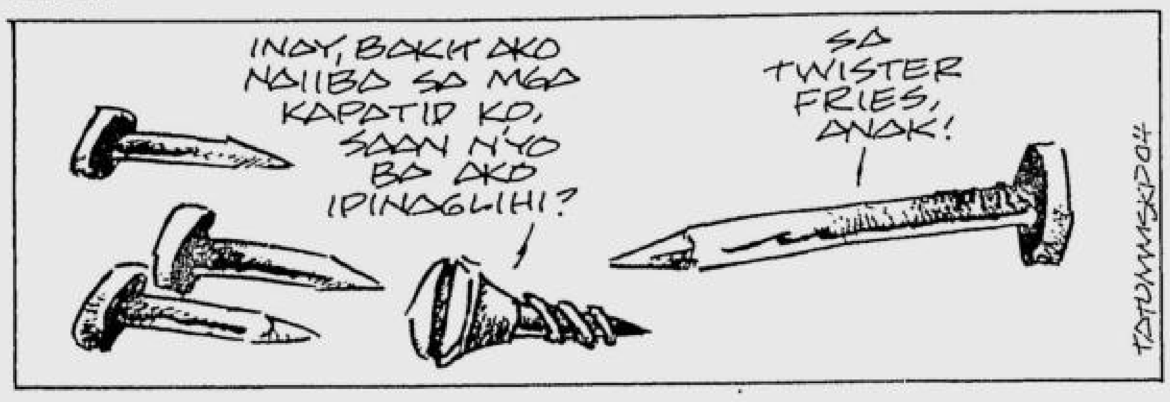
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, DALAWA NA LANG ANG PINAGPI-PILIAN KO SA MGA PRESIDETIAL CANDIDATES...
'YUNG MAKA-DYOS O, YUNG MAKA-SINE!!!
BAKIT SILANG DALAWA LANG?!
'YUN LANG KASI...
ANG MALIMIT GAWIN NG PINOY... ANG MAG-DASAL AT ANG MANOOD NG SINE!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


INAY, BAKIT AKO NAIIBA SA MGA KAPATID KO, SAAN N'YO BA AKO IPINAGLIHI?
SA TWISTER FRIES, ANAK!
TATUM MASKI PAPU 04

THEY ALL HAVE K. Rita Trillo, Audrey Carpio, Marta Tuason-Luque (soon to be Araneta), Karen Grupp and Olivia Francisco

Big love, big hair

From page E1

were in town were still recovering from Bora party fatigue.

That night, the setup was very simple. There were no elaborate VIP areas nor giant stage or floor-to-ceiling décor. "All there was at the party was a really good sound system—it was really about the local DJs," TC insisted. "That is why sponsors should be promoting this culture more—because there is still so much that we have to do."

Sculpted seduction

Young fashion, beauty and art movers met up at Lumiere a couple of weeks back, and it wasn't for Sunday brunch: it was to launch L'Oreal's luscious Kerastase's Nutri Sculpt line.

The line combines art and beauty. Actually it is a range of texturizers that brings nutrition and shine to hair. I didn't know hair care could be so advanced until I encountered the Kerastase line in the better salons this side of town.

And what better way to unveil this new line than a French food and wine festival set up outside the former gallery?

Later, as the party reached its peak, beauty expert **Fiona Lucas** acted as gallery curator. Five different stylists meanwhile acted as Pygmalions to five society mavens acting out as their gorgeous Galateas.

All of a sudden, the L'Oreal-Lumiere sculpture gallery boasted of model **Karen Grupp** being spruced up by **Jimmy Tadeo** of Regine's, writer **Audrey Carpio** being sculpted by **Leonard Vasquez** of Jesi Mendez, partyphile **Rita Trillo** being dolled up by **Lourd Ramos** of Emphasis, Rustan's U muse **Marta Luque** (who will marry **Dino Araneta** this Saturday) having a hair-and-makeup test done by **Allona Carrasco** of Piandre and maven **Olivia Francisco** being enhanced by **Larry Nochete** of Piandre.

All were in orange-and-white ensembles by Regatta and Cebu designer **Jun Escario** (now based in Manila).

Past the party's peak, Kerastase Kelly bags were given out as product manager **Angelique Villaraza** explained, "It doesn't have any competition—it's the only range of its kind in the market," as she swished her long, soft and shiny sculpted hair.

Have a Super! week ahead, and remember, "Life is so short even if you live to 100. Don't waste time thinking about it."

TENT house live. Domini Primero and Candice Gil

SEXY SUMMIT. Rorie Carlos, Myrza Sison and Agoo Bengzon

HAIR YE. Angelique Villaraza sandwiched between Fara and Kara Tolentino

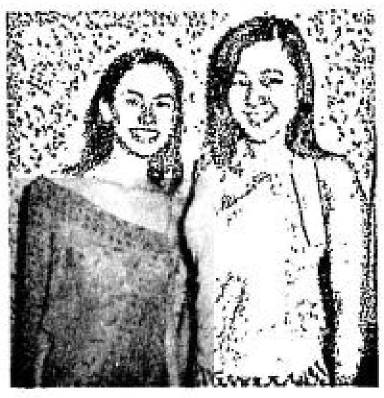
MEG-A BABE. Pierra Calasanz

PREPARATION for the big day? Marta Luque gets primped by Allona Carrasço of Piandre.

PRETTY POSSE. Sigrid Villamil, Paula Nocon and Anne Matoto

REGATTA ROYALTY. Mia Floirendo, Maui Pascual, Carissa Cruz and Barbie Pardo

TATTLING with Blue Carreon

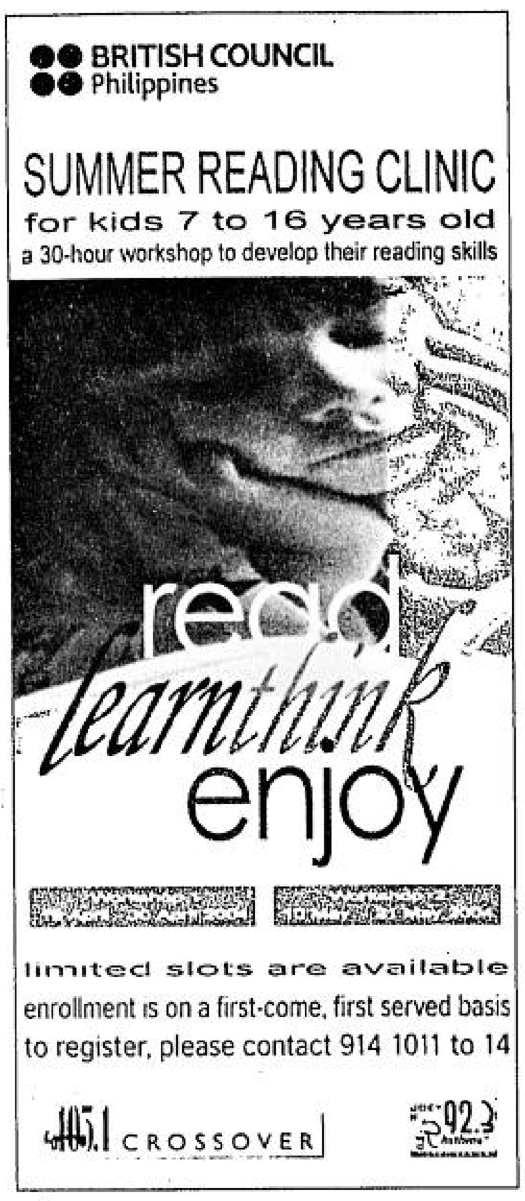


PINK PANTHEONS. Ava Samson and Jane Kingsu

ART MAVENS. Fiona Lucas and Xeng Zulueta

L'OREAL LUSCIOUS. Leica Carpo and Celine Gabriel

FOOD and fun. My favorite chef, Rolly Laudico, with wife Jack



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Make way for airbrush makeup

AIRBRUSH paraphernalia. They look like bottles of watercolor, don't you think?

I'VE always had reservations about being made up by someone else.

Don't get me wrong, I love the royal treatment and the (more often than not) "new and improved" results, but something about sitting on a chair for too long and having someone else's hands skim over every nook and cranny of my face makes me feel oddly "claustrophobic"—almost like I can't breathe.

More so, tools that have been used on other people's faces (no matter how sterilized they are) isn't exactly the most comfortable thought.

When I decided to try out airbrush makeup, it was more for the convenience of getting pretty without giving in to my makeup-brush phobia. I loved the idea of putting on color with minimum hand-to-face contact so much that I didn't prepare myself for the many surprises the whole session would bring.

One of my favorite makeup artists (for her talent and more!), Barbie Chan, was my first choice as far as trying out new makeup "trends" was concerned. I had always been fascinated by her love of color and how she manages to pull off unexpected makeup looks, and I knew she had just gotten back from pro airbrush training in the US.

Lora Gabol

One day I dropped by her San Juan haven, Salon Paradiso, and made my face available for her to play with—with new beauty technology at that!

A word of advice to those who want to try airbrush makeup: Throw whatever preconceived notions you have of it outside the window and allow yourself to be surprised!

YOUR perfect shade is sprayed directly onto the face using the airbrush machine. Barbie keeps coverage sheer by applying color a few inches away from the face.

Very adaptable

First, do not get intimidated by the idea that airbrush makeup is most often used on celebrities who appear on screen and in glossy magazines. This is bound to leave you assuming that 1) it is only best for occasions involving klieg lights; 2) it requires a celebrity's salary; and 3) it is for theatrical effects, thus, will make you look like you're wearing a mask.

On the contrary, airbrush makeup is very adaptable—you can adjust coverage and effects depending on your skin type and other "requirements." Full-coverage airbrush can be done, yes, but it is but one of the many possibilities allowed by this technology.

Also, you need not blow an arm and a leg's worth of budget because, as Barbie puts it, "airbrush makeup will be made affordable to patrons." A whole hair and airbrushing session with her, for example, will only set you back by P1,800—that's the running rate for regular makeup in other salons!

Even more, Barbie is introducing airbrush makeup gradually to clients. Unlike the "veterans" in the US, she keeps it simple and natural by using airbrush where it's needed: on the face as foundation, cheeks as blush, eyebrows, and as a lip color base on the lips.

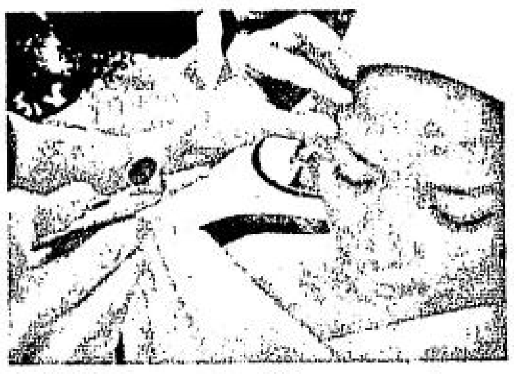
Using it on the eyes can be done, but since majority of the Filipino population have small, almond, and Chinese eyes, manual work has to be done for more definition.

So who are the best candidates for airbrush makeup? I'd say anyone who wants long-staying and true color on her face. Both dry and oily complexions benefit from it since it stays on and requires little (if none at all) touching up throughout the day (I was still standing pretty at midnight even when my makeup was done at lunch).

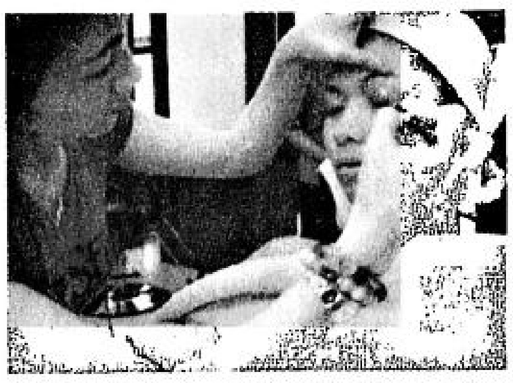
The effect can be surprisingly sheer—it actually looks and feels like you have no makeup on!

If you have special occasions coming up, or simply want to look extraordinarily fresh and pretty for the day, I highly recommend a session of airbrush makeup. Get in touch with Barbie Chan at 0917-8460738 or drop by Salon Paradiso, 450 Gen. Vicente Lim St., Little Baguio, San Juan.

E-mail the author at pdi_vanityfare@hotmail.com



STENCILS are used to fill in sparse eyebrows. Results look perfectly natural, not harshly penciled in!



FOR my *chinita* eyes, Barbie opted to use the old makeup brush techniques.

AIRBRUSHED blush-on subtly contours the face for more defined features. Pearly pink color was also applied on the lips to help lipstick stay on.

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